With Washington at Valley Forge

W. Bert Foster

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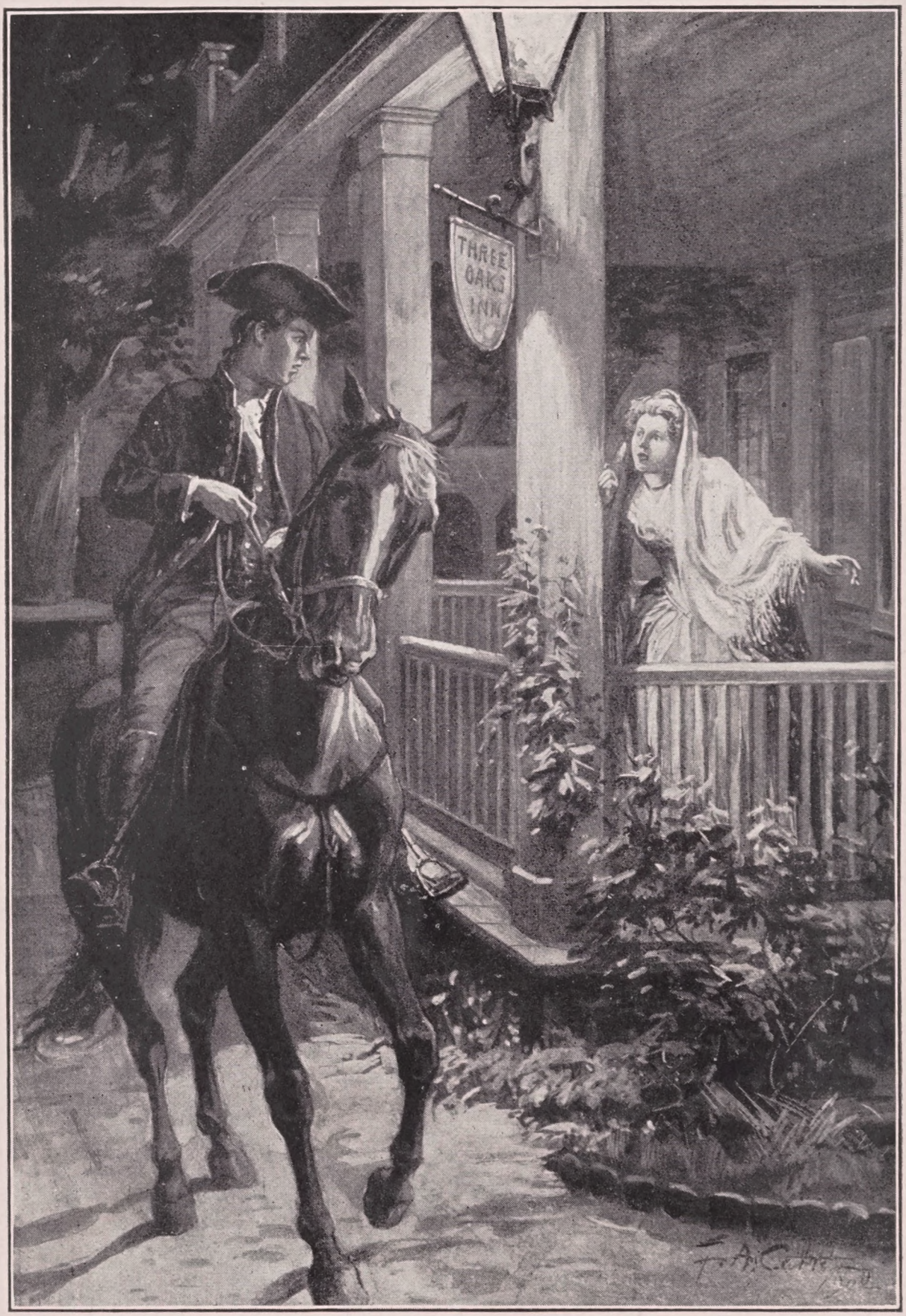

HE WAS STARTLED BY A SOFT "HIST!"

With WASHINGTON *at* VALLEY FORGE

by

W. Bert Foster

Author of

"The Lost Galleon," etc.

Illustrated
by
F. A. Carter

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With Washington at Valley Forge

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WITH WASHINGTON AT VALLEY FORGE

CHAPTER I

UNWELCOME GUESTS AT THE THREE OAKS INN

All day the strident whistle of the locust had declared for a continuation of the parching heat. The meadows lay brown under the glare of the August sun; the roads were deep in powdery yellow dust. The cattle stood with sweating flanks in the shade of the oaks which bordered the stage track, and although the sun was now declining toward the summits of the distant mountains, all nature continued in the somnolence of noon.

A huddle of sheep under a wagon shed and the lolling form of a big collie dog in the barnyard were the only signs of life about the Three Oaks Inn. Mistress and maids, as well as the guests now sheltered by its moss-grown roof, had retired to the cooler chambers, and Jonas

Benson, the portly landlord, snored loudly in his armchair in the hall. Out of this hall, with its exposed beams of time-blackened oak and its high fanlight over the entrance, opened the main room, its floor sanded in an intricate pattern that very morning by one of the maids. Across the hall was the closed door of the darkened parlor.

Had Jonas Benson been of a more wakeful mind, this hot afternoon, it is quite likely that the narrative would never have been written. But he snored on while behind the closed door of the parlor were whispered words which, had they reached his ears, would have put him instantly on the alert.

The year was 1777, a fateful one indeed for the American arms in the struggle for liberty—a year of both blessing and misfortune for the patriot cause. Within its twelve months the Colonies achieved some notable victories; but they suffered, too, memorable defeats. It was the year when human liberty seemed trembling in the balance, when all nations—even France—stood aloof waiting to see whether the star of the American Colonies was setting or was on the ascendant. The British army

under Howe and Clinton occupied New York. Washington and his little force lay near Philadelphia, then the capital of the newly formed confederation. New Jersey—all the traveled ways between the two armies—was disputed territory, disturbed continually by a guerilla warfare, most hard for the peacefully-inclined farmers and tradespeople to bear.

Spies of both sides infested the country; foraging parties, like the rain, descended upon the just and the unjust; and neighbors who had lived in harmony for years before the war broke out, were now at dagger's point. The Tories had grown confident, because of the many setbacks endured by the patriot forces. Many even prophesied that, when Burgoyne's army, then being gathered beyond the Canadian border, should descend the valleys of upper New York and finally join Howe and Clinton, the handful of Americans bearing arms against the king would be fairly swept into the sea, or ground as grist between the upper and nether mill-stones of the victorious British lines.

Jonas Benson was intensely patriotic, and the Three Oaks had given shelter oft and again to

scouts and foraging parties of the Continental troops. The innkeeper had given the pick of his horses to the army, reserving few but such nags as were positively needed for the coach which went down to Trenton at irregular intervals. There were more than his staid coach horses in the stable on this afternoon, however, and the fact was much to his displeasure.

There had arrived at the Three Oaks, the evening before, a private carriage drawn by a pair of handsome bays and driven by a most solemn-faced Jehu, whose accent was redolent of Bow Bells. With the carriage came a gentleman—a fierce, military-looking man, though not in uniform—who rode a charger, which, so Jonas told his wife, would have made a saint envious, provided the latter were a judge of horseflesh. Inside the carriage rode a very pretty girl of sixteen or seventeen, whose dress and appearance were much different from the country lasses of that region.

"They're surely gentle folk, Jonas," Mistress Benson had declared. "The sweet child is a little lady—see how proud she holds herself.

Lawk! it's been a long day since we served real gentles here."

Jonas snorted disdainfully; he suspected that at heart his good wife had royalist tendencies. As for him, the American officers who sometimes made the Three Oaks their headquarters for a few days were fine enough folk. "I tell ye what, woman," he said, "they may be great folk or not; one thing I do know, they possess great influence, or they'd never got through the Britishers with them fine nags. And if the outposts weren't so far away, I'm blessed if I believe they'd get away from here without our own lads having a shy at the horses."

But the Bensons were too busy making their guests comfortable to discuss them—or their horses — to any length. Colonel Creston Knowles was the name the gentleman gave, and the girl was his daughter, Lillian. The driver of the carriage, who served the colonel as valet as well, was called William, and a more stony-faced, unemotional individual it had never been the fate of the Bensons to observe. It was utterly impossible to draw from this servant a word regarding his master's business between the lines of the opposing armies.

These visitors were not desired by Jonas. He kept a public house, and, for the sake of being at peace with everybody, his Tory neighbors included, he treated all guests who came to the Three Oaks with unfailing cordiality. But the presence of Colonel Knowles at this time was bound to cause trouble.

The inn was on the road usually traversed by those in haste to reach Philadelphia, where, while Washington's army was posted nearby, Congress held its session. Many a time the peace of the country night was broken by the rattle of hoofs on the road, as a breathless rider dashed into the inn yard, and with a loud "Halloa!" aroused the stable boy. Then, in a few moments, astride a fresh horse, the unseasonable visitor would hurry on in the night. These dispatch-bearers of the American army knew they could trust mine host of the Three Oaks and that a ridable nag could always be found somewhere in his stable.

The very night Colonel Knowles arrived at the tavern there was an occurrence of this kind. And after the dispatch-bearer had gone and Jonas and Hadley Morris, the stable boy, stood in the paved yard watching him disappear on

the moonlit road, they saw a night-capped head at the colonel's window.

"We'll have no peace, Had, while yon Britisher's hereabout," muttered the innkeeper.

"I wonder why he has come into this country, so far from New York?" was the boy's observation. "He can't be upon military service, though he be a colonel in His Majesty's army.

"He's here for no good, mark that, Had," grumbled Jonas. "I'd rather have no guests at the Three Oaks than men of his kidney."

"His daughter is a pretty girl and kindly spoken."

"That may be—that may be," testily. "You're as short-sighted as Mistress Benson, Had. Ye'll both let this Master Creston Knowles throw dust in your eyes because he's got a pretty daughter. Bah!" And Jonas stumped back to bed, leaving the stable boy to retire to his couch.

But had these well-founded suspicions been to any purpose the innkeeper surely would have remained awake on the afternoon our story opens, instead of lolling, sound asleep, in his wide chair in the hall. Behind the parlor

door, not ten feet away, Colonel Creston Knowles was conversing in a low tone with his serving man.

"And you say it happened twice during the night, sirrah?" queried the British officer, who spoke to everybody but his daughter with sternness.

"Twice, hand it please ye, sir. Hi'm sure the stable was hopened once hafter the time you was hup, sir, hand another 'orse taken out. My life! but Hi thought hit thieves hat first, sir—some o' them murderin' cowboys; but the young lad has 'tends to the 'orses seemed to know them that came, hand they did not touch hour hanimals, sir."

"It's a regular nest of rebels!" exclaimed the Colonel, his brow black enough at the report. "Such places as this should be razed to the earth. The spies who report to this Mr. Washington and his brother rebels evidently have free course through the country. They even exchange their steeds here—with Malcolm's troop lying less than six miles away this very day. William!"

"Yes, sir?"

The Colonel beckoned him nearer and whis-

pered an inaudible order in the man's ear. There was no change of expression upon the servant's countenance and the command might have been welcome or distasteful as far as an observer could have told. When the Colonel ceased speaking William arose without a word and tiptoed cautiously to the door. On pulling this ajar, however, the lusty snoring of Jonas Benson warned him of the inn-keeper's presence. He closed the door again, nodded to the Colonel, and vaulted through one of the open windows, thus making his exit without disturbing the landlord.

But although everybody about the tavern itself seemed to be slumbering, the Colonel's man found that he could not enter the stable without being observed. As he came out of the glare of the sunshine into the half darkness of the wide threshing-floor the Englishman suddenly discovered that he was not alone. The stable boy, Hadley Morris, was just buckling the saddle girth upon a nervous little black mare whose bit was fastened to a long halter hanging from one of the cross beams.

Hadley was a brawny youth for his age, which was seventeen. He was by no means

handsome, and few boys would be attractive-looking in the clothing of a stable boy. Yet there was that in his carriage, in the keenness of his eye, in the firm lines of his chin and lip, which would have attracted a second glance from any thoughtful observer. He had been now more than a year at the Three Oaks Inn, ever since it had become too unpleasant for him to longer remain with his uncle, Ephraim Morris, a Tory farmer of the neighborhood. Hadley was legally bound to Ephraim, better known, perhaps, as "Miser Morris," and, of course, was not permitted to join the patriot army, as he had wished. The youth might have broken away from his uncle altogether had he so desired, but there were good reasons why he had not yet taken this decisive step.

He had found it next to impossible to longer live under his uncle's roof, however, preferring to work for Jonas Benson and allow that grumbling individual to pay over to the farmer the monthly wage which he faithfully earned. Hadley found occasion oft and again to further the cause which in his soul he espoused. It was he rather than the landlord who saw to it

that the fleetest horse in the stable was ready saddled against the expected arrival of one of those dispatch-bearers whose coming and going had disturbed Colonel Knowles the night before. As he now tightened the girth of the mare's trappings she danced about as though eager to be footing it along the stage road toward the river.

"So you are riding hout, too?" observed the Colonel's servant, going toward the stalls occupied by his master's thoroughbreds. "There's a deal of going back and forth 'ere, hit seems to me."

"Oh, it's nothing so lively as it was before the war broke out," Hadley explained, good-naturedly. "Then the coaches went out thrice a week to Trenton, and one of the New York and Philadelphia stages always stopped here, going and coming. Business is killed and the country is all but dead now." William grunted as he backed out one of the carriage horses and threw his master's saddle upon it. "You're going out yourself, I see," Hadley said, observing that the man did not saddle the Colonel's charger.

"Hi've got to give th' beasts some hexercise

if we're goin' to lie 'ere day hafter day," grumbled William, and swung himself quickly into the saddle.

The boy went to the door and watched him ride heavily away from the inn, with a puzzled frown upon his brow. "He's never going for exercise such a hot afternoon as this," muttered the youth. "There! he's put the horse on the gallop. He's going somewhere a-purpose—and he's in haste. Will he take the turn to the Mills, I wonder, or keep straight on for Trenton?"

The trees which shaded the road hid horse and rider, and leaving the little mare standing on the barn floor, Hadley ran hastily up the ladder to the loft, and then by a second ladder reached the little cupola, or ventilator, which Master Benson had built atop his barn. From this point of vantage all the roads converging near the Three Oaks Inn could be traced for several miles. Behind the cluster of tall trees which gave the inn its name a road branched off toward the Mills. In a minute or less the watcher saw a horseman dash along this road amid a cloud of dust.

"He's bound for the Mills—and in a wonder-

ful hurry. What was it Lafe Holdness told us when he was along here the other day? Something about a troop of British horse being at the Mills, I'll be bound." Then he turned toward the east and looked carefully along the brown road, on which any person coming from the way of New York would naturally travel. "Well, there's nobody in sight yet. If that fellow means mischief— Ah! but it's six miles to the Mills, and if he continues to ride like that on this hot day the horse will be done for long before he gets there."

He descended the ladders, however, with anxious face, and during the ensuing hour made many trips to the wide gateway which opened upon the dusty road. There was not a sign of life, however, in either direction.

Meanwhile the tavern awakened to its ordinary life and bustle. The last rays of the sun slanted over the mountain tops, and the shadows crept farther and farther across the meadows. The old collie arose and stretched himself lazily, while the tinkle of sheep bells and the heavier jangle which betrayed the approach of the cattle cut the warm air sharply. A breeze arose, curling the road dust in little spirals and rust-

ling the oak leaves. Dusk was approaching to relieve panting nature.

Jonas awoke with a start, and came out upon the tavern porch to stretch himself. He saw Hadley standing by the gateway, and asked:

"Got the mare saddled, Had?"

"Yes, sir. She's been standing on the barn floor for an hour. One of the other horses has gone out, sir."

"Heh? How's that?" He tiptoed softly to the end of the porch so as to be close above the boy. "Who's been here?" he asked.

"Nobody. But the Colonel's man took one of those bays and started for the Mills an hour ago."

"I d'know as I like the sound of that," muttered Jonas. "I wish these folks warn't here—that I do. They ain't meanin' no good—"

"Hush!" whispered Hadley, warningly.

From the wide tavern door there suddenly appeared the British colonel's daughter. She was, indeed, a pretty girl and her smile was infectious. Even Jonas' face cleared at sight of her, and he hastened, as well as a man of his portliness could, to set a chair for her.

"It is very beautiful here," Mistress Lillian

said, "and so peaceful. I got so tired in New York seeing soldiers everywhere and hearing about war. It doesn't seem as though anything ever happened here."

"I b'lieve something's goin' to happen b'fore long, though," the landlord whispered anxiously, to Hadley, and walked to the other end of the porch, leaving the two young people together.

"It is usually very quiet about here," Hadley said, trying to speak easily to the guest. He was not used to the society of girls, and Mistress Lillian Knowles was altogether out of his class. He felt himself rough and uncouth in her presence. "But we see soldiers once in a while."

"Our soldiers?" asked the girl, smiling.

"No—not British soldiers," Hadley replied slowly.

"Oh, you surely don't call those ragamuffin colonists soldiers, do you?" she asked quickly.

A crimson flush spread from Hadley's bronzed neck to his brow; but in a moment a little smile curled his lips and his eyes twinkled. "I don't know what you'd really call them; but they made your grenadiers fall back at Bunker Hill."

Mistress Lillian bit her lip in anger; then,

as she looked down into the stable-boy's face her own countenance cleared and she laughed aloud. "I don't think I'll quarrel with you," she said. "You are a rebel, I suppose, and I am an English girl. You don't know what it means to be born in the old country and—"

"Oh, yes I do. I was born in England myself," Hadley returned. "My mother brought me across when she came to keep house for Uncle Ephraim Morris—"

"Who?" interposed Lillian, turning toward him again with astonishment in both voice and countenance.

"My mother."

"No, no! I mean the man—your uncle. What is his name?"

"Ephraim Morris. He is a farmer back yonder," and Hadley pointed over his shoulder. "My name is Hadley Morris."

Before Lillian could comment upon this, or explain her sudden interest in his uncle's name, both were startled by an exclamation from the landlord at the other end of the porch.

"Had! Had!" he called. "He's coming."

Hadley left the gate at once and leaped into the road. Far down the dusty highway there

appeared a little balloon of dust and the faint ring of rapid hoofs reached their ears. Somebody was riding furiously toward the inn from the east. Lillian rose to look, too, and in the doorway appeared the grim figure of her father. His face was very stern indeed as he gazed, as the others were gazing, down the road.

The advancing horseman was less than a quarter of a mile away when, of a sudden, there sounded a single pistol shot—then another and another. It was a scattering volley, but at the first report those watching at the inn could see the approaching horse fairly leap ahead under the spur of its rider.

"Ha! the scoundrels are after him!" cried the innkeeper, his fat face paling.

The Colonel's countenance expressed sudden satisfaction. "Go into the house, Lillian!" he commanded. "There will be trouble here in a moment." He brought out from under his coat-tails as he spoke a huge pistol, such as were usually carried in saddle holsters at that day.

Hadley Morris, from the centre of the road, did not see the Colonel's weapon. He only observed the approaching horseman in the cloud of dust, and knew him to be a dispatch-bearer

aiming to reach the ferry and Washington's headquarters beyond. In a moment there loomed up behind him a number of pursuers riding neck and neck upon his trail. They were British dragoons, and the space between them and their prey was scarce a hundred yards.

CHAPTER II

RELATING A WILD NIGHT RIDE

It did not take a very sharp eye to observe that the horse which the messenger bestrode was laboring sorely, while his pursuers were blessed with comparatively fresh mounts. The American had ridden long and hard and his steed was in no shape for such a spurt of speed as it was put to now. The British had kept clear of this road for weeks, because of the foraging parties from Philadelphia, and doubtless the dispatch-bearer hoped to find at the Three Oaks Inn those who would stand him well in this emergency.

At least, there would be a fresh horse there and perhaps a faithful man or two to help beat off the dragoons until he could escape with his precious charge. He had no thought that there was a greater danger ahead of him than behind. The dragoons were lashing and spurring their

horses to the utmost, and now and again one took a pot-shot at him ; but there on the porch of the old tavern stood Colonel Knowles waiting with all the calmness of a sportsman for the quarry to bring the fleeing man to earth.

Young Hadley Morris did not notice the Colonel ; he had forgotten his presence in his interest in the flight and pursuit. But Jonas Benson saw his guest's big pistol and realized the danger to the approaching fugitive. Yet there seemed nothing he could do to avert the calamity. He dared not openly attack the Colonel, for whether the dispatch-bearer escaped or no, the dragoons would be at the tavern in a few moments and there being no such force of Americans in the neighborhood, they might wreak vengeance on him and on his property if he openly stayed the Colonel's hand. The old man was hard put to it, indeed, in this emergency.

Not so, Hadley, however. He was quick of thought and quite as brisk of action. The charge of galloping horse was but a short distance away, the American still a little in the lead, when the boy darted back to the high iron gate which shut the tavern yard from

the road. The barrier had been swung wide open and fastened with a loop of rope to a hook in the side of the house. He slipped this fastening and stood ready to shut the gate between the fugitive and his pursuers, and thus delay the latter for a possible few moments.

If the dispatch-bearer got into the yard safely he could leap upon the back of the black mare now standing impatiently on the barn floor, and escape his pursuers through the field and orchard back of the inn outbuildings. No ordinary horse would be able to leap the high gate, and Hadley did not believe the dragoons were overly well mounted. As the dispatch-bearer dashed up, foam flying from his horse's mouth and the blood dripping from its flanks where the cruel spurs had done their work, it looked to Colonel Knowles as though the American would ride right by, and he raised his pistol in a deliberate intention of bringing the man to earth.

But as he pulled the trigger old Jonas stumbled against him and the ball went wide of its mark. The shot did much harm, however, for it added to the fright of the already maddened horse, which leaped to one side, pitching

the man completely over its head upon the pavings of the tavern yard. The horse fell, too, but outside the gate, and Hadley was able to slam the barrier and drop the latch into place before the dragoons arrived.

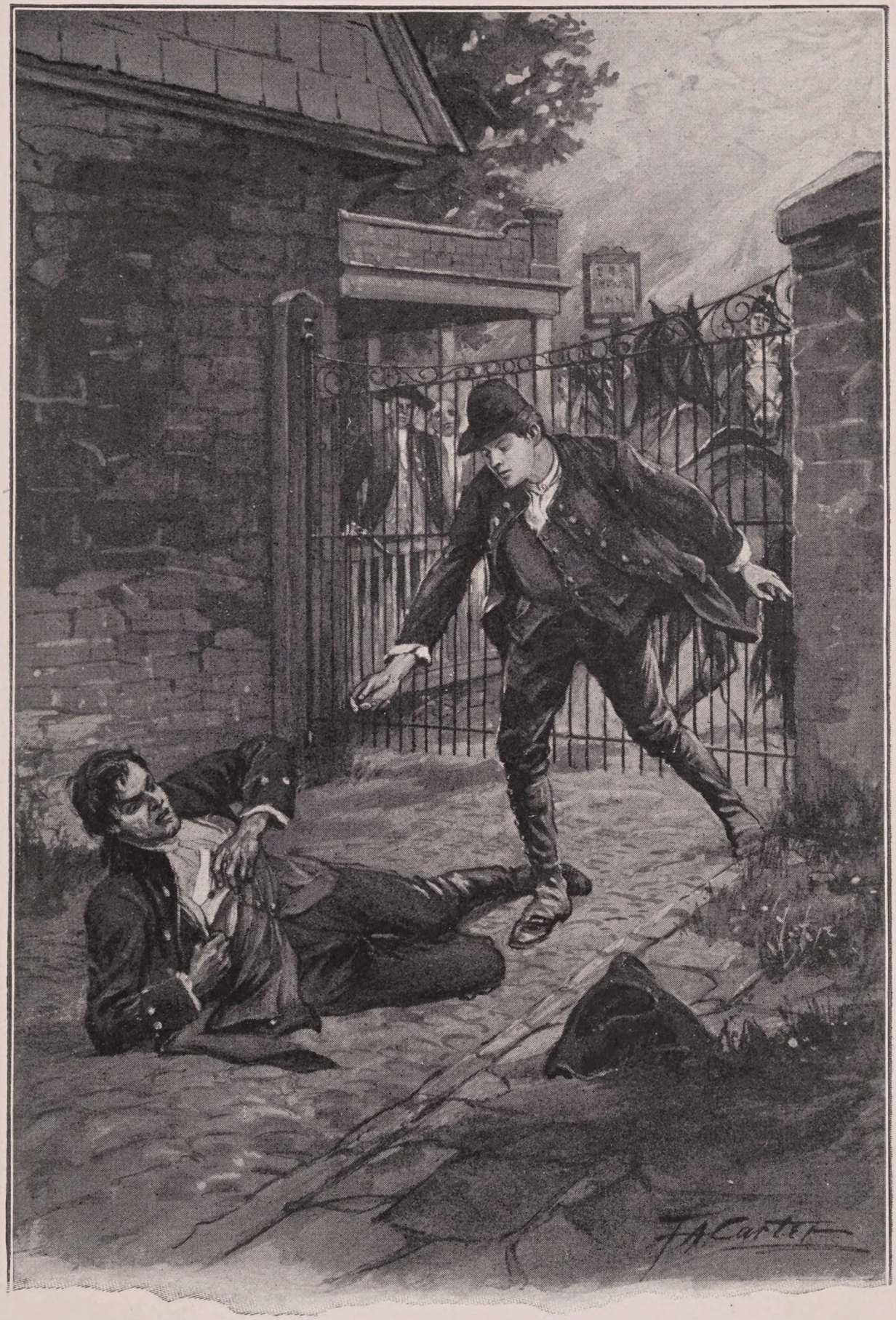
The explosion of the Colonel's pistol and that officer's angry shout, warned Hadley of the added and closer danger. He darted to the side of the fallen messenger. The poor fellow had struggled partly up and was tearing at his coat. His face was covered with blood, for he was badly injured by his fall; but one thought kept him conscious.

"The papers—the papers, lad!" he gasped. "For General Washington—quick!"

But he had only half pulled the packet from his inner pocket when he dropped back upon the flagstones, and, with a groan, lay still. Hadley seized the precious papers and leaped to his feet. With a clatter of hoofs and amid a cloud of dust, the dragoons arrived at the gate.

"There he is! He's down—down!" shouted the leader. "We've got him safe! Hi, there, landlord! Open your gate or we'll batter it in!"

"They've got him safe, that's a fact," thought



"THE PAPERS—THE PAPERS, LAD!"

Hadley, in distress. "But—but they haven't got the papers!" He turned swiftly and ran toward the barn.

"There goes one of them running!" shouted a voice behind. Then a pistol exploded, and Hadley leaped forward as though the ball had stung him, although it whistled far above his head.

"Look out for that boy!" he heard Colonel Knowles say, and glancing back Hadley saw the officer leaning out of one of the tavern windows which overlooked the yard. At a neighboring casement the fleeing youth saw Lillian. Even at that distance, and in so perilous a moment, Hadley noticed that the girl's face was very pale and that she watched him with clasped hands and anxious countenance.

One of the dragoons had dismounted and now unbarred the gate. Before Hadley reached the wide doorway of the barn the soldiers were trooping through into the yard.

"The boy has the papers—look after him, I tell you!" he heard the Colonel shout. Then Hadley pulled the great door shut and fastened it securely on the inside. For an instant he could breathe.

But only for an instant. The dragoons were at the door then, beating upon it with the hilts of their sabres and their pistol butts and demanding entrance. Hadley had no weapon had he desired to defend the barn from attack. And that would be a foolish attempt, indeed. It would be an easy matter for the dragoons to break down the fences and surround the barn so that he could not escape, and then beat in the door and capture him—and with him the papers. He did not know how valuable those documents might be; but the courier man now lying senseless in the inn yard had saved them at the risk of his life; the boy felt it his duty to do as much.

Colonel Knowles had now come out into the yard and taken command of the attack. Evidently he was recognized by the British soldiers, despite his civilian's dress. He gave orders for a timber to be brought to beat in the door, and Hadley likewise heard him send two of the soldiers around the barn to watch the rear. If the boy would escape it must be within the next few seconds.

He ran back to the rear of the building. Here was another wide door and he flung it

open. The soldiers had not appeared; but the doorsill was a dozen feet and more from the ground. The barn had been built on the side of a hill. Directly below the door was a pen in which hogs were kept. Twelve feet was a good drop and, besides, it would be impossible to escape the soldiers on foot.

A crash sounded at the front of the building. The men had brought up the timber for a battering ram. The door would certainly be burst inward before many moments. Hadley ran back to the waiting mare that already seemed to share his own excitement. He freed her from the halter and sprang into the saddle. He dared not try getting past his enemies when the door fell, and with a quick jerk of the rein he pulled the mare around. She trotted swiftly to the rear door which the boy had flung open; but when she saw the distance to the ground below, her ears went back and she crouched.

"You've got to do it, Molly!" exclaimed the boy, desperately. He reached to the stanchion at his right hand and seized a riding whip hanging there. As the mare continued to back, Hadley brought the lash down again and again upon her quivering flank. The poor beast was

not used to such treatment and in her rage and fright she forgot the danger ahead and leaped straight out from the open stable door!

Hadley stood up in the stirrups when he felt her go. He knew where she would land, and he believed the feat would be without danger; but he was ready to kick out of the stirrups and save himself if the little mare missed her footing.

Fortunately she landed just where he had planned. There was a pile of straw and barn scrapings below the door, and from this Black Molly rebounded as though from a mattress. She was not an instant in recovering herself, and still frightened by the sting of the whiplash, darted out through the orchard. Hadley flung away the whip and leaning forward, hugged her neck so as not to be swept off by the low branches of the apple trees.

There was a wild halloa behind him. The dragoons sent to cut off his escape had arrived too late; and they vainly emptied their pistols at the flying black mare and her young rider.

"They won't give up so readily," Hadley muttered, not daring to look around while still in the orchard. "That Colonel Knowles will never be outwitted so easily by a boy. I'll

make right for the ferry and perhaps I may meet Holdness somewhere on the road. I can give the papers up to him and I know he'll find some way of getting them to General Washington."

He pulled Black Molly's head around and took a nearer slant for the road. The mare was more easily managed now and when he reached the stone fence which divided the orchard from the highway, his mount had forgotten her fright and allowed him to stop and fling down a part of the wall so that they could get through and down the bank into the road. Looking back before descending the bank, Hadley saw several horsemen streaming through the orchard behind him and, more to be feared than these, was the party leaving the inn yard and taking to the very road out upon which he had come. At the head of this second cavalcade rode Colonel Knowles himself on his great charger, and Hadley's heart sank. Black Molly was famed throughout the countryside for her speed; but that great beast of the Colonel's—evidently brought from across the sea and a thoroughbred hunter—would be more than a match for the little mare in a long chase.

"We must do our best, Molly," cried the boy, slapping her side with his palm and riding down into the dusty road. "You can keep ahead of them I know for a short distance, and you must do your best now. It will soon be too dark for them to see us clearly, and that's a blessing."

The little mare needed no spur or urging. She clattered along the darkening road with head down and neck outstretched, Hadley riding with a loose rein and letting her pick her own way over the track. He could trust to her instinct more safely than to his own sight. The oaks cast thick shadows across his path and now the whole sky was turning a deep indigo, specked out here and there with starpoints. There was no moon until later, and he believed the darkness was more favorable to him than to his pursuers.

He could hear the thunder of the hoofs behind him, however, and he patted Molly's neck encouragingly and talked to her as she ran. "Go it, girl! you've got to go!" he said. "Just make your little feet fly. Remember the times I've rubbed you down, and fed you, and taken you to water. Just do your very prettiest, my girl,

for it's more than my life you've got to save—it's these papers, whatever they be."

And the little mare seemed to understand his sore need, for she strained every effort for speed. She fairly skimmed over the ground, and for the first mile or more the hoof-beats gained not at all upon them. Then, to Hadley's straining ears, it seemed as though the pursuit grew closer. It was not a mob of hoof-beats which he heard, but the steady, unbroken gallop of one horse. And it took little intuition for the boy to know which this leading pursuer was. The great black charger, the Colonel's mount, had left the dragoons behind, and its stride was now shortening the distance rapidly between its master and himself.

"Oh, Molly, run—run!" gasped the boy, digging his heels into the mare's sides.

Molly was doing her best, yet the sound of the black horse's hoofs grew louder. The road was not straight or Hadley might have looked back and seen the Colonel bearing down upon him. But the officer could doubtless follow his prey by the sound of Molly's feet, quite as accurately as Hadley could judge his speed. At this thought, and hoping to put his pursuer at a

disadvantage for the moment, the boy pulled the mare out upon the level sward beside the road. There she pattered along almost silently; but the boy could hear the thunder of pursuit growing louder and louder.

But now that the clatter of his own mount's hoofs were not in his ears, Hadley was suddenly aware of a new sound borne to him on the night air. And it was not from the rear, but from ahead—the loud complaint of ungreased axles; a heavy wagon was coming slowly along the road.

"If it should be Holdness!" gasped the boy. "It sounds like his wagon."

Around another turn in the crooked road they flashed and then the creaking of the wheels were quite near. A great covered wagon loomed up in the dusk and Hadley uttered a cry of joy.

"Lafe! Lafe Holdness!" he shouted, while yet the wagon was some rods away.

But the driver of the squeaking vehicle heard him, and there was a flash of light as he rose up on the footboard and held the lantern above his head.

"Hi, there! Slow down or ye'll run over me!" drawled a nasal voice.

"The British are after me—I've got dispatches!" shouted the boy, reining in the mare beside the wagon.

"Had Morris, as I'm a livin' sinner! Jefferspelters! What ye doin here?" Then the driver cocked his head and listened to the thud of hoofs behind the flying boy. "They're arter ye close, lad—an' Molly's winded. Quick! Back into the bushes yonder. It's your best chance."

Hadley had ridden by, but he wheeled Molly about and forced her into the thick brush beside the road. Here, completely hidden, he pressed his hand upon her velvety nose, ready to stifle any desire on her part to whinny when the pursuing horses should arrive.

And they were here in a moment now, Colonel Knowles on his great charger ahead, and the company of dragoons not many rods behind.

CHAPTER III

BLACK SAM

THE officer, wheeling his big steed directly across the road, halted the astonished team of draught horses perforce.

"Who be yeou, mister, an' what d' ye want?" drawled the teamster. "There seems to be a slather o' folks ridin' this road ternight."

"See you, sirrah!" exclaimed the Colonel, riding close up to the driver and scanning his smoothly shaven, humorous face closely. "Has a boy on horseback just passed you?"

"Wa-al now, I couldn't tell whether it was a boy 'r th' old Nick himself," declared Holdness, with apparent sincerity; "but suthin' went by me as slick as er streak o' greased lightnin'."

"Sure he passed you?" repeated the British officer.

"Honest Injun!" returned Holdness, with perfect truth. "I didn't ketch much of a sight

of him; but he went past. What's goin' on, anyway sir?"

But Colonel Knowles, having considered that he had found out all that was possible from the countryman, paid no attention to his question, but turned to the dragoons who now thundered up. "He's still ahead of us, men!" he cried. "We must overtake him before he reaches the ferry—"

"Indeed we must, Colonel," interposed the sergeant in command of the dragoons. "There will be a force of the enemy at the ferry, it's likely, and we must not be drawn into any skirmish. Those were my orders, sir, before I started."

"After him at once!" shouted the older officer. "I tell you the boy must be stopped. The papers he bears may be of the utmost importance."

They were all off at a gallop the next instant, and the axles of the heavy wagon began to creak again. "Them fellers seem toller'ble anxious ter see yeou, Had," drawled Holdness, turning half around on his seat. "What yeou been doin'?"

Hadley allowed Black Molly to step out of

the bushes, and related in a few words the excitement at the inn and his escape from the barn. "And now I want to know what to do with the papers, Lafe. Will you take 'em, and—"

"No, sir! I can't do it. I've orders to perceed just as I am perceedin' now, an' nothin' goin' ter stop me."

"But the papers may be of importance. The man said they were for General Washington."

"Then take 'em across the river an' give 'em ter the Commander-in-chief yourself. That's what yeou do, sonny!"

"Me go to General Washington?" cried Hadley.

"Wa-al, that's what I said. And if ye want my advice I sh'd say ter skin erlong now while ye've got th' chanct. Them Britishers air likely ter come back here anytime an' suspect suthin', not findin' ye on the ferry road. Yeou'd better skin acrost an' take the lower road an' keep away from the ferry altogether. There ain't none of our troops there jest now—I c'd ha' tol' that little ossifer that if he'd axed me. Yeou kin git acrost th' river an' be at Germantown by sunrise—if ye git ter movin' quick now."

"But what will Jonas say—"

"Don't yeou fret erbout Jonas. I'll fix him as I go by. I can't relieve ye of any responserbility; the duty's yourn—do yeou do yer best with it."

Hadley very well knew that Lafe Holdness of all men was able to advise him rightly. The teamster—a thorough Yankee from the Massachusetts Colony—was one of Washington's most trusted scouts at that time, and when he said that duty took him in the opposite direction, Hadley knew it to be no use to try to turn him from his course. The packet of papers which the boy had taken from the injured dispatch-bearer were his affair, not Lafe's. He must carry them himself to their destination, and although he trembled before the task, his heart likewise throbbed at the prospect. To go on toward Philadelphia—to see, perhaps, General Washington himself—the project could not have failed of stirring the blood in his veins.

"I'll do it, Lafe!" he exclaimed. "But I don't know what Uncle Ephraim will say when he hears of it. He'll think I've run away to join the army."

"Don't yeou worry erbout ol' Miser Morris,

Had. He's as mean a Tory as there is in New Jarsey, ef he is your kin.

"Take the lower road," Holdness advised again, "an' try to git across the river before midnight. When those dragoons find nobody at the ferry they might take it inter their pesky heads ter s'arch along the river bank. The Alwoods have got a bateau there"—

"I don't believe I could trust them," Hadley interrupted.

"I know. They're pizen Tories—the hull on 'em. But there's a long-laiged boy there; what's his name?"

"'Lonzo."

"Ya–as. That's him. Mebbe you c'd make him pole ye over."

"'Lon doesn't like me any too well," Hadley returned, with a laugh. "He wanted to work for Jonas and Jonas wouldn't have him, but took me instead."

"An' good reason for it, too," Holdness said. "Jonas didn't want one o' that nest o' Tories spyin' on everything that goes on up to the inn. Wa–al, ye'll hafter do what seems best ter ye when yeou git there, Had. That's all I kin tell yer erbout it. Ride quick, an' find some

way of crossing as soon as possible. When ye hit aour lines—"

But the boy had already given his impatient mount the rein, and the mare, well recovered from her fast pace while escaping from the dragoons, trotted rapidly along the farm path which here opened out of the stage-road. Night had shut down completely now, and without a moon. The earth was wrapped in a thick mantle of darkness, and under the trees which by day shadowed the farm path Hadley Morris was forced to depend entirely upon the mare's good sense in picking her way. The path led across a corner of his uncle's farm, and he knew the neighborhood well enough. At one point he saw the flash of a lamp in the window of Ephraim Morris's kitchen, where the old man now lived alone. He had been too penurious to pay a housekeeper since Hadley's mother died, and now that the boy had left him, too, he made shift to do all his housework himself, and a sorry thing he made of it.

As he had time from his duties at the inn, Hadley was in the habit of going over to the farmhouse and cleaning up a little for the old man. The farm itself was run like clockwork,

and old Ephraim had plenty of help, for he was a money-maker as well as a money-saver. But none of the help were ever allowed inside the door of his dwelling. The old man believed that everybody was after his savings, and although he was unkind and crabbed to his nephew, Hadley was the only person he really trusted. The boy pitied him more than aught else, and although he could no longer live under his uncle's roof, he could not bring himself to break with him altogether. In the unsettled state of the community and of the laws at that time Ephraim Morris would have had a hard time indeed to hold his nephew to his bond and keep him out of the American army; but to Hadley it was more than a legal bond—it represented a promise to his mother which in honor he could not break.

Had he not been so hurried on this night, and his errand been so important, he would have stopped long enough to see if his uncle was all right. But now he rode past the house at a distance of a few rods, heard the big hound baying angrily at the sound of his horse's hoof-beats, and hurried on to the highway which bounded the rear of the farm. On this road

were a few scattered dwellings, mostly inhabited by farmers of more than suspected royalist tendencies. In the house nearest the river lived a family named Alwood, the oldest son of which was in a Tory regiment; the other boy, a youth of about Hadley's age, was one with whom our hero had come in contact more than once.

As long as human nature is practically unregenerate we are all bound to have our likes and dislikes, and age is not behind youth in this. There are people whom we cannot meet even casually without clashing, and Hadley Morris was no exception to the general rule. He and young Alwood were at loggerheads, and perhaps by no fault of the former. Alonzo Alwood had desired Hadley's place at the Three Oaks Inn, and Jonas had hired Hadley; then, Lon and his folks were intensely loyal to the king, whereas, although old Ephraim Morris was well known as a Tory, it was not hard to guess Hadley's love for the American cause. In a mixed community, where patriotic farmers and Tories both resided, it was very difficult to eliminate personal encounters among the grown men, and even more so among the boys.

Hadley and Lon Alwood had attended

the same school previous to the breaking out of the war, and for months before the massacre at Lexington, in the Massachusetts Colony, feeling had run high here in Jersey. The school itself had finally been closed, owing to the divided opinions of its supporters; and whereas Hadley had been prominent among the boys opposed to king and Parliament, Lon was equally forward among those on the other side. Many of their comrades, boys little older than themselves, were in one or the other army now, and Hadley Morris thought of this with some sadness as he rode on through the night.

Perhaps he would never see some of his old school chums again. Education was hard enough to come by in those times, and the boy appreciated the slight chance with which he had been blessed. The few months Uncle Ephraim had spared him from the farm to attend school in the winter had been helpful indeed to him. And that fact, perhaps, made the friendships formed during his school terms seem the more precious.

"I only hope I won't run across Lon," Hadley muttered, as Black Molly clattered along. "I don't just see how I am to pole that heavy

flatboat across the river alone; but I cannot call upon any of the Alwoods to help me. Ah! there's Sam."

Not that Hadley saw the individual of whom he spoke ahead of him. Indeed, he could not see a dozen feet before the mare's nose. But there had flashed into his mind the remembrance of the black man who was one of the few slaves in the neighborhood. Black Sam belonged to the Alwoods, and although an old man, he was still vigorous. He lived alone in a little hut on the river bank, and it was near his cabin that the Alwoods' bateau was usually chained. The old slave was a favorite with all the boys, and Hadley Morris had reason to know that Sam was to be trusted. More than once he had ferried travelers over the river in his master's bateau—travelers who did not consider it well to cross at the regular ferry above. And these persons the Alwoods knew nothing about; if they had, poor Sam's back would certainly have suffered for his work. Sam was heartily for the cause of the Colonies, and not entirely for the reason that the men he helped across the river paid him well, either.

When the young dispatch-bearer reached the

bank and the black man's hut, his mare was all of a lather and it was upwards of ten o'clock. The Alwood house was several rods away, and as was the case with all the other farm-houses he had passed since crossing his uncle's estate, was wrapped in darkness. Nobody would travel these Jersey roads by night, or remain up to such an hour, unless urgency commanded.

Hadley rolled off his mount and rapped smartly on the cabin door. He was not sure that Black Sam was there, although through the gloom he could see the big flat-bottomed boat pulled up on the shore. And when there was no response to his first summons, his heart fell. The river was too wide to swim the mare over, and he would need her as sorely on the other shore as he had on the Jersey side. So he knocked again, this time a little louder.

Then, to his joy, there was a sound within. Somebody turned over upon what rustled like a husk mattress or bed of straw, and there followed a mighty yawn.

"Yah-ho!" grumbled the voice of the negro. "Who dat at my do'?" for Hadley had rapped for a third time.

"Sam! get up!" the boy whispered, shrilly.

Sam's feet struck the floor, then, and his untimely visitor heard him fumbling his way to the door. "Who dar?" repeated the black man.

"It's me—Had Morris. I want you," whispered the boy.

"Want me!" exclaimed the astonished Sam. "Is dat sho' 'nough you, Master Had? How come yo' 'way down yere fr'm de T'ree Oaks? Whadjer want?"

"I've got to get across the river—quick, Sam! I haven't a minute to lose."

"Why don' yo' go up to de ferry, Master?" demanded the negro, still behind the closed door.

"I can't go there. The Britishers are there, and they're after me."

"Is dat de truff!" gasped the man. He pulled the cabin door open a tiny crack, and all Hadley could see were his glistening teeth and the whites of his eyes. But Sam was evidently assured that his visitor had given his true name, for in a moment he opened the portal wider and stepped out.

"Lawsey, Master Had! it is sho' 'nough you. How come yo' ter git in such er fix?"

"I can't stop to tell you that, Sam." Then he drew nearer and whispered in the old man's ear: "I'm going to headquarters. I've got dispatches that must reach General Washington."

"But I can't take yo' ober de riber, Master Had. Master Alwood nigh erbout skin me alibe ef he cotch me helpin' yo' rebels."

"I tell you you've got to go!" exclaimed the boy, desperately, believing the darkey was refusing because of a natural disinclination to turn out at that time of night.

"Oh, well, Master, ef dat's de way yo' puts it, I s'pose I'se b'leeged ter he'p yo'. I s'pose yo' is gotter pistol an' I ain't takin' no chances ob stoppin' a charge of buckshot."

"'Deed, and I haven't anything of the kind," declared Hadley, failing to penetrate the darkey's meaning.

"Sho! yo' ain't got no weapons, Master Had? Den how yo' goin' ter capture me an' make me he'p yo' ober—I wants ter ax yo' dat? I gotter be captured, so's I kin tell Master Alwood ef he cotches me gone. Oh, lawsey! I tell you—yo' is a mighty strong boy fo' yo' age, Master Had. I seen you th'ow Master 'Lonzo over yo' head w'en you an' him was wrastlin once. Yo' just

tell me you'll pitch me inter de ribber an' drown'd me ef I doesn't he'p you, hey? How's dat?"

"That's what I will do, if you don't hurry!" exclaimed Hadley with real impatience now.

"Good! I'll come right erlong, Master Had —I'll come right erlong. I nebber did laik drown'din'."

Sam went down to the boat before his "captor" and hastily unfastened the chain. Then both putting their shoulders to the gunwale, they shoved the craft down the sloping beach into the water. Sam placed a wide plank from the shore to the flat and Hadley led Black Molly across and urged her into the boat.

Just as they were ready to shove off and the young courier was congratulating himself on the safety of his project, there came a startling interruption. A figure ran down to the landing from the direction of the cabin, and, finding the boat already afloat, the newcomer leaped aboard before Sam and Hadley could push away.

"You black limb! I've caught you this time. What are you gettin' the boat out for at this time o' night?" demanded a wrathful voice, which to Hadley seemed familiar.

Black Sam, who stood beside him, and whom he could feel begin to shake, whispered in his ear: "Dat ar's Master Lon—whadjer goin' to do?"

CHAPTER IV

MAKING AN ENEMY SERVE THE PATRIOT CAUSE

At any other time Hadley would not have been so disturbed at meeting Lon Alwood, for although they were not friends, he was scarcely afraid of the Tory youth. But now when he was in such haste and so much depended upon his getting across the river in the quickest possible time, the unexpected appearance of young Alwood unnerved him.

"Whadjer goin' ter do, Master Had?" whispered the frightened darkey. "Sho's yo' bawn I'll be skinned alibe fur dis."

"Who's that with you, Sam?" demanded his young master. "You're helping some rebel across the river—I know your tricks. I tell you when father hears of this he'll make you suffer for it!"

Sam groaned and began to stammer. "Sho—sho's yo' bawn, Moster Lonzo; I didn't go for

to do hit—'deed 'n' I didn't! Dish yer gen'leman, he made me git de boat out—'deed 'n' he did. Said he'd th'ow me overb'd if I didn't do jest's he said."

"Throw you overboard!" ejaculated Lon, in disgust. "You're a mighty cute darkey, you are! There aren't many men around here who could throw you overboard. Now you just pole back to the shore—"

"But dis gen'leman do jest's he say, Master Lon!" cried the negro, in real fear. "He done th'ow you in a wrastle—yaas indeedy!"

"Who is he?" demanded Lon, belligerently, coming forward.

"It's Had Morris," the young courier said, breaking his silence. "You needn't come any nearer, Lon, to find out. But as long as you are aboard, you can pick up that other pole and help Sam."

"Had Morris!" shouted the other boy in astonishment and wrath. "Think you're going to run off with our boat, hey? I'll show you—"

He made a dash for his enemy; but Sam, who although so frightened still stood close by Hadley's side, suddenly took something from the

breast of his shirt and thrust it into the dispatch-bearer's hand. It was a long barreled pistol, and the darkey had doubtless waited until the last moment before offering its use to his young friend, because of the law of the Colonists against slaves carrying weapons. But the moment had arrived for drastic measures, and Sam trusted the youth. "Hold on Lon!" exclaimed Hadley, accepting the pistol with secret astonishment, but quick witted enough to turn its unexpected possession to good advantage. "I am in a hurry and you can't stop me now. You'll have to go along with us. Sam will need your help coming back, too."

"Do you think I'm going to do what you say, Had Morris?" cried the other, in a towering rage. "Why, I'll—"

"Take up your pole, Sam!" commanded Hadley, hastily. "The boat's swinging down stream. Quick, now!"

He had heard a door shut somewhere near and was quite sure that the elder Alwood was apprised of the noise at the riverside and was coming to see about it. Hadley stepped to where Lon stood in frozen amazement, and, holding the pistol at a threatening angle, patted each

of his enemy's side pockets and the breast of his shirt. Lon was without arms.

"Lon, you pick up that other pole and set to work or I'll shoot you!" commanded the young courier, sternly. "If you were in my shoes you'd treat me just as I'm treating you. I've got to get across the river and nothing you can do will stop me. No you don't!" Lon had half turned as though he contemplated leaping into the river. Hadley raised the pistol again menacingly. "Pick up that pole!" he commanded.

But the captive was slow about picking up the pole and helping to push the heavy flatboat out from the bank. The figure of the elder Alwood loomed up suddenly above them. "Lon! Lon! Is that you out there? What are you and Sam doin' with the boat?"

"Keep on poling and save your wind!" commanded Hadley threateningly, still with the pistol at Lon's side.

But the old gentleman's wrath rose, and believing it was not his son aboard the boat he brought his old-fashioned squirrel rifle to his shoulder. "Stop where you be!" he called, threateningly. "I ain't goin' to let you scala-

wags run off with my property—not by a jugful! Come back here with that boat or I'll see if a charge of shot'll reach ye!"

"Don't shoot, dad!" yelled Lon, in deadly fear of the old man's gun. "You'll like enough shoot me instead of him. I can't help it. He's got a pistol an'—"

"Who is it?" cried the elder Alwood. "Where's Sam?"

"It's Had Morris. He's makin' Sam and me take him across the river."

"Is that his horse I see there?" demanded the wrathful farmer.

"Yes, dad. Shoot it!" shouted Lon.

"Don't you do it, Mr. Alwood," warned the dispatch-bearer. "I've got my pistol right against your son's ribs, and when you fire your gun, I shall pull the trigger."

"Never mind, dad!" yelled Lon. "Don't shoot the horse."

Hadley nearly choked over his captive's sudden change of heart and even black Sam chuckled as he bent his body against the pole at the other side of the boat. They were now well out from the shore and the water was deepening. Suddenly above the loudly expressed indignation

of Farmer Alwood, sounded the clash of accoutrements and the ring of hoofs. A cavalcade was coming along the edge of the river from the direction of the regular ferry.

"What is to do, here, sirrah?" demanded a sharp voice which Hadley knew very well. It was the troop of dragoons with Colonel Knowles at their head. They had not found their quarry up the river and suspecting that he had struck out for some other place of crossing, were scouring the bank of the stream. Alwood's boat was the nearest. The farmer explained the difficulty he was in—his son and slave being obliged, at the point of a pistol, to pole the stable boy of the Three Oaks Inn across to the Pennsylvania side of the river.

"Ha! Hadley Morris, you say? The very boy we're after!" cried the colonel. "Men! give them a volley!"

"No, no!" cried the old man. "That's my son out there and my servant. You want to commit murder, do ye?"

"This Alwood is a loyal man, Colonel," the sergeant said.

Colonel Knowles snorted in disgust. For the moment he was evidently sorry that the Alwoods

were not the worst rebels in the country so that he could have a good excuse for firing on the rapidly disappearing boat. Their voices still floated across the water to Hadley and he heard the sergeant say: "We'd best give it up, sir. There's no way of crossing near here and the whole country will be aroused if we don't get back to our command. There are more rebels than Tories in this neighborhood, sir."

"Keep at it, boys!" Hadley commanded. "I've got my eye on you, Lon—don't shirk. Hurry up there, Sam, you black rascal!" He could have hugged Sam in his delight at getting away from his enemies; but he did not wish to get the old man into trouble. So he treated him even more harshly than he did Lon all the way across the wide stream. But Lon was in a violent rage when the big flatboat grounded on the Pennsylvania shore.

"You may think you're smart, Had Morris!" he exclaimed, throwing down the pole as Hadley took Molly's bridle to lead her ashore. "But you an' me haven't squared accounts yet. If you're running away to join Washington's ragamuffins yon'd better not come back here on our side of the river. We'll fix you if you do.

Anyway, the king's army will be here like enough in a few days, and they'll eat up the last rag, tag an' bobtail of ye!"

Hadley laughed, but kept a grip on the pistol until he got Molly ashore. He knew that, had he dared, young Alwood would have done something beside threaten; he was not a physical coward by any means.

"Don' yo' run away wid ol' Sam's pistol, Master Had," whispered the negro. "Dat pistol goin' ter sabe ol' Sam's life sometime, like 'nough."

"You'll get into trouble with the farmers if they catch you with such an ugly thing in your clothes," Hadley returned, doubtfully, for like the other whites of the neighborhood he did not believe in too much liberty for the blacks, although the masters were struggling for their freedom.

"Master Holdness gib me dat weepon," responded Sam, "an' he mighty pleased wid me, Master Had."

Hadley handed back the pistol when he heard the scout's name, for he knew that Holdness must have some good reason for wishing Black Sam to be armed. Lon had not seen this little

byplay; but he shouted for Sam now to help pole the boat back across the river.

"Be as slow as possible, Sam!" Hadley whispered, leaping astride his mare. "Those chaps over there might take it into their heads to cross after all, though they'd be running their necks into a noose. Our people must be all about here."

Sam pushed the heavy landing plank aboard again and picked up his pole while Hadley rode up the steep bank and reached the highway. He turned Molly's head toward Philadelphia, and then, for the first time, wondered how he was to find General Washington's headquarters? News circulated but slowly at that time, and all the good people about the Three Oaks Inn knew was that the army was on the move—marching this way and that within a few miles of the capital, waiting to learn positively in which direction Lord Howe's fleet was headed. It was expected that the British would strike for Philadelphia; but it was of the utmost importance for Washington to know at what point the enemy would land to march on the Quaker City.

Black Molly had recovered her wind now,

and as soon as she struck the hard road started at a fast pace without being urged. Hadley knew the general direction which he was to follow, for the first few miles at least; but he had never been over the road before. Holdness had given him some idea, the week before, of the arrangement of the American outposts, and he realized that he was very liable to fall in with scouting parties at almost any point on this side of the river. Unarmed, and with the precious packet which had been so hardly saved from alien hands, there was little wonder that the boy should feel much trepidation as he rode forward.

There were Tories on this side of the river as well as on the Jersey side. Probably he would fall in with no more dragoons; but there were plenty of ill-disposed persons lurking between the territory held by the British about New York and that covered by the Americans around Philadelphia, who were ready to sell their very souls for money. If he fell into the hands of these bushwhackers, the dispatches might never reach General Washington, and if he fought to retain the packet his body would likely be found beside the road in the morning

riddled with bullets. Hadley had shown plenty of pluck in escaping from the inn, and in crossing the river on the Tory's bateau; but one always fears the unknown danger more than the known. The possibility of falling in with royalist sympathizers or other ill-disposed persons on the dark woodroad along which the little mare bore him, caused the boy to fairly shake with dread. Every noise startled him. If Molly stepped upon a crackling branch he threw a startled look from side to side, fearing that some enemy lurked in the thickets which bordered the road. It would be an awful thing to be shot down from ambush, and it would scarcely matter whether he was shot by bushwhackers or scouts of the American army.

By and by, however, the narrow woodroad opened into a broader highway. He was on the Germantown pike, and there were houses scattered along the roadside, but all were dark and only the baying of the watchdogs disturbed the silence as Molly bore him on and on, her tireless feet clattering over the hard packed road. The mist rising from the lowlands stretched itself in ribbons across the road as though to bar his progress. He drew up the

collar of his coat and bent low over Molly's neck, shivering as the dampness penetrated his garments. It was early cockcrow. Suddenly from just before him where the mist hid the way came the clatter of arms. A cry rang out on the morning air, and Molly rose on her haunches and backed without her rider's drawing rein. Hadley was nearly flung to the ground.

"Halt!" cried a voice, and in front of the startled youth appeared half a dozen figures, all armed with muskets and dressed in garments so nondescript that their affiliation whether with the British or American armies it would have been hard to guess. "Who are you, Master?" demanded the voice which had cried "Halt!" "Why do you ride so fast on this road, to-night?"

"See if he has the word, Bumbler," advised a second man, and the party advanced on the mare and her rider.

"It's a good horse, but she's been ridden far," declared a third. "She'd sell for something handsome in Germantown."

At this Hadley was quite assured that he had fallen into the enemy's hands with a vengeance.

He dared not say that he had dispatches for General Washington, for he believed the men who had stopped him to be either royalist sympathizers or a party of stragglers seeking what unattached property they might obtain, being sure of going unscathed for their crimes because of the unsettled state of the country. Uniforms among the American troops were scarce at best. At this time some of the regiments were distinguished merely by a cockade, or a strap on their coats, while their uniforms were naught but the homespun garments they had worn on joining the army.

"He's only a boy, Corporal," said the first speaker, and a lean, unshaven face was thrust close to Hadley's. "Get off the horse, lad. It's too good for you to ride—unless you're riding for the right side?"

This was said questioningly, and Hadley realized that he was being given an opportunity to answer with the countersign, but whether British or American he did not know. And little good would it have done him had he been sure of the affiliation of these men. He knew the watchword of neither army.

"I am riding in a hurry to Germantown,

sirs," he said. "I do not know the password. I hope you will not stop me—"

"Not stop you!" exclaimed the man called Bumbler, harshly. "That's what we're here for—to stop all such masterless men as you. For sure, Corporal, he looks like a runaway 'prentice."

The man who seemed to have informal charge of the others came closer now. He was portly and red-faced, and wore a blue and white cockade in a rather smart hat. Hadley had seen such a badge before and knew it to be that of certain of the Pennsylvania troops. Yet it might be assumed to still suspicion. Certainly these fellows did not inspire confidence.

"What are you doing on this road?" demanded the Corporal. "And without the word? Didn't you expect to fall in with the outposts?"

"With what outposts?" cried Hadley.

"Ours, of course—the American outposts. Are you one of this Tory tribe with which the country is overrun?"

At this Hadley, scarce convinced, yet grown desperate by the situation, flung much of his caution to the winds, and replied, "I am as

anxious to reach the American outposts as I can be. I have got to go to headquarters—"

"Whose headquarters?"

"The Commander-in-chief's."

"I believe the lad's got dispatches, Bumbler!" declared the corporal. "Pull him off that horse and let us see."

Then indeed did Hadley Morris fear that he had said too much and that these men were what he first feared—bushwhackers. Made desperate by this thought, he dug his heels into the mare's sides, and if two of the men had not seized her bridle and nigh dragged her to her knees, she would have broken through and escaped. Meanwhile the man, Bumbler, grasped Hadley by the collar and pulled him bodily from the saddle.

"Ah ha, ye little viper!" exclaimed he. "Ye'll not get away so easily."

"Easy with the boy, man!" exclaimed the Corporal. "See if he's got any papers about him. This is a queer set-up altogether, for a lad to be riding like mad toward headquarters and over this road."

Breathless and disposed to believe the worst of his captors, Hadley fought with all his

strength to retain the packet, but Bumbler tore open his coat and his big hand sought the boy's inner pocket, where the precious papers lay.

CHAPTER V

THE MAGIC OF A NAME

FLAT upon his back on the hard roadway, with the knee of Bumbler pressing upon his chest, Hadley Morris was little able to defend the dispatches which he had received from the injured courier in the yard of the Three Oaks Inn. The man tore the coat apart, felt first in one innner pocket and then in the other, and finally, with a grunt of satisfaction, brought the sealed packet to light.

"Dispatches, corporal, as sure as aigs is aigs!" he exclaimed, passing the packet up to the officer.

"Huh! We'd better go careful here, Bumbler—we'd better go careful," said the portly man, doubtfully. "None of you know the boy?"

The men, who had crowded around, all shook their heads. "Like enough he's no business

with the papers," Bumbler declared. "He's no regular dispatch-bearer, an' mayhap those papers came from York."

"They're addressed to nobody," grumbled the corporal.

"Open 'em and see what's in 'em," suggested Bumbler, his sharp eyes twinkling. He was still on his knees and holding Hadley on the ground.

There was just enough light now for the boy to see the faces of these men rather more distinctly than at first. The mist grew thinner as the dawn advanced, and there was a faint flush of pink in the east above the treetops. He could have cried with disappointment and rage. After coming all this way and escaping much harm, to be finally overpowered and the papers taken from him by these ill-governed hangers-on of the American army (for this he had finally made up his mind the men were) was a bitter pill to swallow. He plainly saw that, even if they were really loyal to the cause, they intended using the papers to their own advantage, and, after his long night's ride he would get nothing but hard words and a possible beating if he did not submit meekly to having the

dispatches carried to headquarters by other hands than his.

But while he lay there on the ground thinking this, his ear caught the sudden rumble of carriage wheels coming swiftly along the pike. He heard them fully half a minute before the men were aware of the approaching vehicle. "Quick!" exclaimed the corporal, who had not yet opened the packet. "Somebody comes. Drag the boy to one side, Bumbler, and hold him till we see who this may be."

Hadley was assisted to his feet with no gentle hand and the men separated, hiding in the brush on either side of the road. In a few moments a heavy carriage drawn by four fine horses dashed into view. The carriage was, indeed, a "chariot," as the private traveling coaches of England were called at that day, and this vehicle was evidently of English manufacture. Beside the coachman there was a footman, or outrider, on a fifth horse and a darkey in livery sat up behind.

The corporal shouted hoarsely to the coachman, and the presentation of five muskets (Bumbler still hung on to Hadley) quickly brought the carriage to a halt. In answer to

the challenge the door of the coach opened and a sharp voice demanded the cause of the disturbance.

"Travelers on this road must have the password, Master," the corporal said. "You are near the outposts of the army."

The man in the coach at once leaped out and approached the scouting party. He was rather a tall man, dressed in semi-military manner, for he wore a sword at his side and a buff coat with satin facings of blue. His long, beardless face was lean and ruddy, and his hair was rolled up all around the back in the fashion of the day. His nose was aquiline and his chin long and prominent—such a chin as physiognomists declare denotes determination and perseverence. When he removed his hat to let the cool morning air breathe upon his uncovered head his brow was so high that it fairly startled the beholder. Hadley, from his station beside the road, was vastly interested in this odd-looking gentleman.

"So you wish the countersign, do you, my man?" demanded the stranger, looking the corporal over with hauteur. "What regiment are you?"

The corporal mentioned one of the regiments of State troops which at that time formed a part of Washington's forces.

"Then you should know me, sirrah, although I have not the countersign," the gentleman said. "I am John Cadwalader."

"Colonel Cadwalader—of the Silk Stocking Company?" Hadley heard Bumbler mutter.

The corporal looked undecided, and stammered: "Faith, Mr. Cadwalader, ye may be whom ye say; but it's our orders to let no one pass without an investigation—"

"Investigate, then!" snapped the gentleman. "If you do not know me send one of your men on with my carriage to your commanding officer. I am on my way to headquarters and should not be delayed."

"I can spare no men, for I'm foraging," declared the corporal, still hesitating.

"What do you intend doing then, dolt?" cried the officer, wrathfully. "Will you keep me here all the morning?" Then seeing Hadley in the grasp of Bumbler, he added: "And you are keeping that boy prisoner, too, are you? You'll have your hands full, sir corporal, before you get back from this foraging expedition of yours.

Your commanding officer is to be congratulated on having such well disciplined men in his rank and file." Evidently noticing the disarrangement of Hadley's garments he added, looking at the boy again: "And why do you hold this farmer lad prisoner, pray?"

At that the boy made bold to speak for himself, for he believed this gentleman must really be somebody of importance. "If it please you, sir, I was hastening to General Washington's headquarters with dispatches—which, I believe, only yesterday came from New York—when these men stopped me and have taken away my papers—"

"Ha!" exclaimed the gentleman, scrutinizing the youth sharply. "You're over young to be trusted with important news for the Commander-in-chief. How came you by these papers?"

In a few words Hadley told of the injury to the dispatch-bearer at the Three Oaks Inn, and how he had escaped with the papers and crossed the river.

"Well done!" cried Cadwalader, evidently enjoying the story. "Ye did well. And now these fellows have taken your packet, eh?" He

turned a frowning visage upon the corporal. "How is this?" he demanded.

"We know nothing about the lad, your honor," said the corporal.

"Return to him the papers and let him go on with me in the carriage. His horse looks fagged, and had best be left in the care of some loyal farmer nearby."

"But how are we to know you?" began the corporal, desperately.

At this Bumbler left Hadley's side and plucked at the petty officer's sleeve. "Don't be foolish, Corporal," he whispered, hoarsely. "It's Colonel Cadwalader, true enough. I've seen him in Philadelphia many a time."

At this assurance the other grudgingly gave up the papers to their rightful possessor again and Hadley turned a beaming face upon Colonel Cadwalader.

"You get right into the carriage, boy, and let my man here lead your mare. We will find a safe place for her ere long, and you can pick her up on your way home—if you return by this road. But a well set-up youngster like you should be in the army. We'll need all such we can get, shortly, I make no doubt."

Hadley had no fitting reply to this, but, urged by the gentleman, entered the coach and the horses started again, leaving, the chagrined corporal and his men standing beside the road. The morning was breaking now and the boy saw at a glance that the furnishings of the vehicle were much finer than any carriage which had stopped at the Three Oaks Inn within his remembrance. Even Colonel Creston Knowles's coach was not as fine as this, and he felt that his apparel was neither nice enough nor clean enough to warrant his sitting inside with the owner. He would have felt much more comfortable on the driver's lofty perch. But Colonel Cadwalader insisted upon his detailing his adventures of the night more fully as they rode on, and Hadley had little time to think of the strangeness of his position. The boy had never heard of John Cadwalader or the "Silk Stocking Company" of which he was originally the commander; but the gentleman was something of a figure in Philadelphia society before the war broke out and was one of Washington's closest and most staunch friends throughout the struggle for independence.

John Cadwalader, son of Thomas Cadwalader,

a prominent physician of the Quaker City, was thirty-three years of age when the war for independence began. At the time of the Lexington massacre he was in command of a volunteer company in Philadelphia organized among the young men of the elite or "silk-stocking" class. But despite the rather sneering cognomen applied to it, the authorities found the Silk Stocking Company well drilled and disciplined, and every member of it was a welcome addition to the State troops.

When the Committee of Safety was formed, John Cadwalader was a member—and an active one—until appointed colonel of one of the city battalions, and was later made brigadier-general under the State government. During the winter campaign of 1776–1777 he commanded the Pennsylvania troops, his first real engagement being the attack on Princeton in January, 1777. Shortly after this battle Washington wrote of him: "A man of ability, a good disciplinarian, firm in his principles, and of intrepid bravery."

This John Cadwalader held rather a peculiar relation toward Washington and toward the existing struggle. He was a man of enormous

personal fortune, whom it was very desirable to engage in the service of the Colonies, and he appears to have had more of his own way when in the service than any other officer on Washington's staff. He was never really mustered into the regular service, for when not in the field in command of State troops he acted either as a volunteer or under specified orders for particular work. This arrangement was of his own choosing, as he was twice offered a commission as brigadier-general and both times declined the appointment from Congress.

Hadley Morris might have sought far, therefore, before finding a more able friend to introduce him into the presence of the Commander-in-chief of the American forces. So close were the relations between Cadwalader and Washington that later, after the battle of Monmouth, the former took up the Commander's personal quarrel and fought and wounded the notorious Conway in a duel near Philadelphia.

By and by the conversation between Hadley and his host flagged. The boy's head fell back against the comfortable cushions, and he dozed while the carriage rolled swiftly on. They were stopped half a dozen times, but at no point was

there any difficulty. There was always somebody who knew Colonel John Cadwalader. The magic of his name opened the way to the very presence of the Commander-in-chief into whose hands Hadley had been told to deliver the packet in his possession. The boy was finally aroused from his uneasy sleep when the traveling coach stopped before the door of a large residence beyond Germantown which happened, for the nonce, to be the headquarters of His Excellency.

A troop of horse surrounded the house and aides were dashing up to it and away from it all the time, while officers were going in and out and talking in groups about the door. There was an air of excitement everywhere and when Colonel Cadwalader alighted from his coach half a dozen men at once surrounded him to inquire if he had brought news from the East.

"I know not exactly what I bring, gentlemen," said Cadwalader, laughing and laying his hand upon Hadley's shoulder. "But I have a lad here who wishes to see His Excellency. He has crossed the river and come a long way for the purpose; what he bears, though, I cannot tell."

"His Excellency is exceeding busy this morning, Colonel," said one of the officers doubtfully. "Unless this be an important matter—"

John Cadwalader's head came up and his keen eyes flashed. "Tell him that Mr. Cadwalader awaits his pleasure," he said briefly, "and that he brings a lad with him whom it would be well for His Excellency to see."

He turned his back upon the group and waited with marked impatience until a servant came with a request from the Commander-in-chief for Colonel Cadwalader and his charge to come into the house at once.

"Follow me, lad," the gentleman said. "You have risked much and traveled far to do the cause a service, and you shall have fair play!"

CHAPTER VI

A GREAT MAN'S COUNSEL

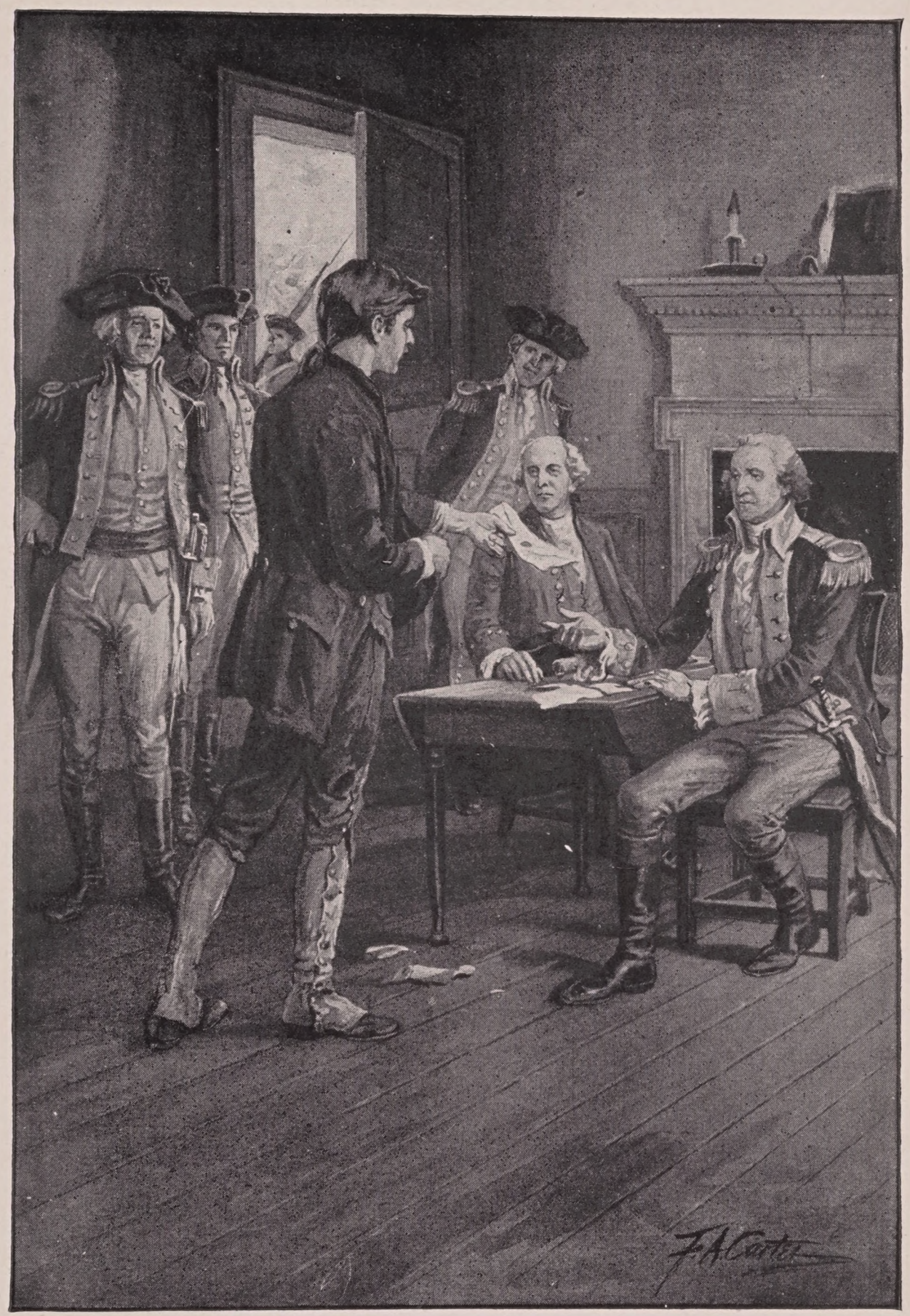
Officers stood about in the hall of the house, as they did outside, and many spoke to Colonel Cadwalader as he led his protégé in; but he answered them briefly. Evidently his pride had been touched by the incident of the moment before and he was struggling to keep his temper in check. He was kindness itself to Hadley Morris, however.

"Have no fear of your reception by General Washington," he whispered. "The dispatches you bear will be sufficient introduction."

But Hadley was afraid. Not, perhaps, that he feared any unkind treatment; but in kind with most youth of his bringing up and station in life, he looked in actual awe upon such a great man as the Commander-in-chief of the American forces. The familiarity with which we treat our public men of the present day would

have horrified society in the days of Washington. And Washington was peculiarly a great man. An aristocrat of the aristocrats, his manner and bearing although ever kindly toward his subordinates unless they displeased him, nevertheless exercised over those whom he met casually—people of ordinary position in life—a somewhat awesome influence. His courtliness, the highmindedness which was so plainly expressed in his features, the glance of his keen eye which read men so quickly and easily, were overpowering to the average man.

No wonder then that Hadley Morris stood in the great man's presence, having passed the sentinel at the door with Colonel Cadwalader, hardly able to lift his eyes to the face of the Commander-in-chief. He had never seen General Washington before, nor had a picture of the commander found its way to the Three Oaks Inn; but instinctively the boy picked him out of all the officers in the room, and that before his sponsor had spoken. Washington sat at a little deal table which at the moment served him as a desk. In these days his headquarters were scarcely the same twenty-four hours at a time. When he glanced up, seeing Colonel Cadwala-



"COME FORWARD, LAD," SAID GENERAL WASHINGTON

der, he arose to greet him, coming forward a pace to do this with much cordiality.

"We have great need of you, Mr. Cadwalader," the general said, waving Hadley's new friend to a seat near the little table. "You come from the river?"

"Aye, General. But I can give you little news of a satisfactory character I fear. However, here is a young lad who bears something which may prove of moment."

Washington glanced swiftly at Hadley who stood, plainly ill at ease, wringing his old cap in his hand. The brilliant, if travel stained uniforms of the officers who surrounded the general, contrasted oddly with the patched and soiled garments the boy wore. He had ridden away from the Three Oaks Inn in his stable dress and he felt the incongruity of his presence now more keenly than before.

"What does the young man bring?" asked Washington.

"Come forward, my lad," Cadwalader urged. "Give His Excellency your packet."

With trembling fingers Hadley unbuttoned his coat and drew forth the sealed papers. He knew all the time that those keen eyes were

looking him over. They seemed to penetrate even the wrapper of the packet. "Where are you from, boy?" asked Washington.

"From—from the Three Oaks Inn," stammered Hadley. In his own ears the voice sounded from a long way off.

"And who gave them to you?" was the next query.

Hadley stammered worse than ever in trying to tell this, and John Cadwalader took pity upon him. "So many strangers confuse the lad, General. But he's by no means a youngster without resources. From his story I reckon him a youth of action rather than of words," the Colonel said, smiling.

"Egad!" exclaimed one of the amused officers, under his breath, "it's boys like him we want, then."

Rapidly Cadwalader related the story of the injury to the dispatch-bearer at the Three Oaks Inn, of Hadley's escape from the dragoons with the papers, and of his adventures on the road—just as the boy had told it to him in the carriage. Meanwhile General Washington had slit the wrapper of the packet and unfolded the papers it contained. He nodded now and then

as Cadwalader's story progressed, but at the same time he glanced hastily over the papers.

"Ha! the boy has done us a service, indeed," the Commander said at length. "These matters are most important. The papers come direct from New York, gentlemen, and we have here at last a sure outline, I believe, of His Lordship Howe's intentions. It is well, my lad," he said, glancing again at Hadley, "that you let not the packet fall into the hands of the enemy. Our work would have been put back some days—perhaps crippled. I must see more of you. You seem heartily in sympathy with our country's cause. Why have you not enlisted?"

"Egad, General!" exclaimed the same subordinate, who had before spoken, "I'll set him to drilling myself, if he'll enlist. He's a man's stature, now, if not a man's age."

The boy flushed and paled by turns as he listened to this. "Come, speak up, Master Morris!" exclaimed Cadwalader, encouragingly.

"I—I cannot enlist, if it please Your Honors," the boy said. "My uncle will not let me."

"And who is this precious uncle of yours

who'd keep a well set-up lad like you out of the army ?" demanded the second officer.

"Ephraim Morris is his name, sir. We live hard by the Three Oaks, across the river. I work for Jonas Benson, who keeps the inn."

"We have record of this Ephraim Morris," said a dark-faced man in the corner, looking from under lowering brows at the boy. "As rank a Tory as there is in all Jersey. I'd not put too much trust in what the boy brings, gentlemen, if he's Miser Morris's nephew."

The words stung Hadley to the quick. Unconsciously he squared his shoulders and his eyes flashed as he looked in the direction of the last speaker. "My uncle refuses me permission to join the army, it is true," he said, chokingly, "but he has no power to change my opinions."

"Well said," cried the first man to urge his enlistment. "Nor has he any real power to keep you out of the army. You're big enough to be your own master. Come, let me send you out to my drill sergeant. He'll make a soldier of you in no time."

Hadley hesitated, and again his face crimsoned. "There is another reason why I cannot do this," he muttered.

"Reason piled upon reason," growled the man in the corner. "I like not these fellows who reason; 'tis a lawyer's trick."

Some of the listeners laughed, but to Hadley the matter was serious, and he continued: "My uncle is an old man, and lives alone. I do not wish—I cannot go far from him, because he might need me at any time. And then, I promised I would not leave him unless he made me."

"Promised! Whom did you promise?" queried Colonel Cadwalader, who, with His Excellency, had listened to the discussion in silence.

"My mother, sir."

"Egad! Another relative for an excuse, eh?" said the young officer, who seemed to so desire Hadley's services, and he laughed rather disgustedly. "And cannot the good lady be encouraged to let her son away from her skirt-tails?"

Hadley's eyes flashed no little wrath as he turned upon the speaker. Awkward as he had felt himself to be on first entering the room, and awed as he was by the presence of so many strangers, he forgot all this now. "My mother

is dead, sir! I respect her memory and her wishes. I would have you respect her also, sir."

For an instant there was silence. Washington flashed a glance at Colonel Cadwalader and the latter spoke: "No more of this baiting, gentlemen. Let the lad alone."

The dark man in the corner growled something inaudible, but the other, who was a fresh-faced man, and young himself, came forward to Hadley's side, quickly. "Your pardon, Master Morris," he said in a low voice. "I meant no harm with my raillery."

And at this Hadley was still more covered with confusion, for he feared he had said too much. But his sponsor beckoned him forward and motioned him to stand by the table at which the Commander-in-chief was now writing.

"Master Morris," Washington said, "you seem to have good reasons for not enlisting. But I believe you are in sympathy with us and heed your country's peril. You live in a community where you may be of great benefit to us in the future. You have mentioned a man named Holdness. You know him well?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then deliver this note to him when next he passes the Three Oaks Inn. He will return on the morrow or next day, I hear. Meanwhile be always ready to serve the cause, as you did last night, and despite your uncle's prohibition against your joining the army, we shall count you among our most useful servants. A boy who respects the wishes of his mother—whether she be with him or whether she be in her grave—can, I think, be trusted. What say you, Mr. Cadwalader?"

The Colonel bowed. "My mind, exactly, General," he said.

"This will pass you through the outposts," the commander said, handing the two papers he had written to Hadley. "The Colonel tells me you have a horse not many miles from here. I wish you a safe return."

Too disturbed to scarce know what he replied, Hadley got out of the room, and not until he reached the open highway did he take a free breath. And all the way back to the farmhouse, where Molly had been left, he grew hot and cold by turns, as he thought of the awkward figure he must have cut in the presence

of the leader of the American cause. It was mid-afternoon ere he recovered his horse and started for the river. Molly had been refreshed and carried him swiftly over the road to the regular ferry, where he had been unable to cross the night before. He met with no difficulty in passing the outposts and such scouting parties of the American army as he met. There was no sign of the British soldiery upon this side of the river. He crossed the ferry at dark, and three hours later rode quietly into the inn yard from the rear and put Black Molly into her stall. Then he approached the house, wondering what reception he should meet if Colonel Knowles and his daughter were still sheltered there.

CHAPTER VII

A FRIEND ON THE ENEMY'S SIDE

THE collie rattled his chain at the corner of the sheep pen, and from a low growl changed his welcome to a bark of delight and frisked about Hadley's legs as the boy stopped to pat him. The house door across the paved yard opened and the innkeeper's voice cried: "Be still, Bose! Who's out there?"

Hadley went nearer and laughed. "What's the matter, Master Benson?" he asked. "Are the dragoons still about the place?"

At once the innkeeper plunged down the steps, and reaching the boy seized him tightly in his arms. "Had! Had!" he cried. "Why did you come back to the Three Oaks? We thought you'd join the army for sure this time."

"To leave you without a stableboy?" laughed Hadley. "And how about uncle—what would he say?"

"Humph! Miser Morris sent over to see where you were, this very day. He heard something of your brush with the redcoats, and I reckon he's not pleased. Ye'd best keep away from him for a day or two, till he cools down." Then he added, drawing the boy toward the kitchen door: "Colonel Knowles pretty near froths at the mouth every time he hears your name mentioned. Lafe told us how neatly you and Molly slipped the redcoats."

"Is the Colonel still here?" asked Hadley, in haste, drawing back from the inn.

"Yes, he's here," grunted Jonas. "I wish he'd finish his business, whatever it is, and be gone. The Three Oaks don't have many guests, these times, it's true, and he pays in good English gold; but his room would be more welcome than his company."

"I did not see his horses in the stable, when I put Black Molly in her stall, just now," said Hadley.

"And did you bring her back with you?" cried the delighted Jonas. "Well, well! I thought sure some o' them Tories or ne'er-do-wells on the other side of the river would get her. Colonel Knowles's horses are stabled in the little

shed hard by. He is afraid they're not safe in the barn, and his man, that close-mouthed William, sleeps with the critters. 'Twouldn't surprise me a bit, Had, if something happened to the Colonel, as well as to his horses, if he acts 'round here as he did the other day. Some of the neighbors are mighty mad over his trying to shoot the dispatch-carrier. The poor man was terribly hurt."

"Is he here?" asked the boy.

"No. Lafe took him in his waggin' over to neighbor Chimes' house. Mistress Chimes is a famous hand in sickness, and, to tell you the truth, Had," and Jonas sunk his voice to a whisper for they were near the door, "my woman isn't so earnest in the cause as we might wish. She was lady's maid, or some'at like that, in the old country, an' having this Colonel and his daughter here isn't doing her a bit of good. I don't dispute but her heart's with the Britishers."

"She'll tell the Colonel that I'm here then," Hadley said, stopping at the foot of the steps.

"Well, he can't do anything to ye. The dragoons are no longer at the Mills. Malcolm's troop started for York this morning. There's

something going to happen 'fore long, for the British are stirring and they say Lord Howe has sailed with his fleet."

"I know," said the boy, with some pride. "There's going to be a big battle, or something. Those papers I ran away with told all about Lord Howe's plans and now our generals will be able to meet him."

"Who told you?" Jonas asked, open mouthed in astonishment.

"I heard General Washington himself say so," declared the boy, and then, having entered the wide inn kitchen, and finding it empty (for the maids had gone to bed) he had to sit down and relate the particulars of his ride to Germantown and his brief interview with the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces.

"I've heard of that Colonel Cadwalader," Jonas said, drawing a long breath, "and you were sartainly lucky to make such a powerful friend, Hadley. Why didn't you join the army? You'd make a good soldier, and perhaps get to be a captain, or something. Men rise quick from the ranks nowadays."

"You know very well why I cannot enlist," Hadley replied, gravely. "If Uncle Ephraim

should tell me I could go I might feel as though I would not be breaking my word by enlisting. But unless he says so, I don't see how I can do it, much as I would like to."

The innkeeper shook his head. "Ah, boy, there's plenty of time yet for you, it's likely. The struggle is bound to be a long one. The king is sending over more troops, they say, and there's a big force marching from Canada. We'll never give up till we're free; but most of us may be dead before freedom comes."

"You talk faintheartedly, Master Benson," Hadley said. "You should have seen all the fine officers and the troop of horse I saw at Germantown. I don't believe the king has finer soldiers."

"But he's got better fed and better paid ones," declared the man. "A soldier can't really fight well, not even when he is heartily for the cause, if his wife and bairns are starving at home—and mayhap he himself in need of a square meal. Ah, boy, the colonies are at a bad pass. If France would only come out frankly and say she was with us, heart and soul, we'd have a chance. Individual Frenchmen show their interest by coming here and joining our army;

but it is the backing of the French government that we need."

The innkeeper spoke hopelessly as many another patriot American was speaking in those days. The war had lagged for months and months, and the issue seemed no nearer solving than when the minute men of Lexington were shot down like dogs at the bridge and on the town common. The American forces had won some hard-fought battles; but each victory had seemed a reverse, for either lack of men or lack of commissary stores, or of ammunition, forced the army to retire instead of following up the advantage gained.

Mistress Benson came in after a time and her delight at seeing Hadley safe and sound again was sincere although as Jonas had admitted to the boy's private ear, she was none too sympathetic with the patriot cause. She set before Hadley a bountiful repast and made him eat his fill. Then he retired to his usual couch in the loft of the great barn and slept undisturbed until morning.

He was currying Black Molly in the open door of the stable before breakfast when Colonel Knowles chanced to stroll into the inn yard.

The Englishman stopped and stared at the stable boy with lowering brow. Hadley kept at work, whistling cheerfully, a little amused at the Colonel's evident surprise, and not at all sure what the outcome of the meeting might be.

"Well, young man!" exclaimed the guest. "You certainly are a youth of mettle to dare come back here after what occurred the other day. Do you not know who I am?"

"You are a guest of Master Benson's sir," Hadley said, quietly.

"I am an officer in His Majesty's army, sir."

"But you are in the enemy's country just now, Colonel Knowles," the boy said, softly. "The dragoons are no longer within call, and although there are some Tories in the neighborhood, there are more men who hold to the cause of the Colonies. I think I am safer to come back here than you are to remain."

The Colonel's face flushed deeply. "Let me tell you, sirrah, that a parcel of hot-headed farmers cannot scare me. I shall remain in this vicinity as long as I please and dare Mr. Washington's ragamuffins to come and take me."

"I think the neighbors feel some opposition to your remaining here because of what you did

the other day, sir," Hadley declared, respectfully. "If you are not troubled yourself, you should be willing to let us alone. Nobody is interfering with your business; but if you shoot at dispatch-bearers and try to capture their papers, the farmers will certainly be aroused against you."

"Humph!" grunted the Colonel; but the words evidently impressed him. After a moment of sullen silence he said: "They tell me your name is Morris; is that so?"

"It is, sir."

"Do you know a person named Ephraim Morris living in this part of the country?"

"That is my uncle's name," declared the boy, and his interest grew, for he remembered his conversation two days before with Mistress Lillian.

"How old a man is he?" demanded Colonel Knowles, with some eagerness.

"Rising sixty, sir. He is a farmer and lives not more than four miles from here."

"Well," said the Englishman, turning finally on his heel, "you're a worthy nephew of such an uncle, I don't doubt."

"I'm afraid Uncle Ephraim would not agree

with you," Hadley called after the gentleman. "He is a Tory."

But Colonel Knowles paid no further attention to him, and the boy went on with his work. But his mind ran continually on the interest the Colonel and his daughter evidently had in old Ephraim Morris. Mistress Lillian herself appeared after breakfast, while Hadley was clearing up the entrance to the inn yard. Jonas Benson prided himself on having everything about the inn as neatly kept as did his wife inside the house.

"Hadley Morris!" the Colonel's daughter exclaimed, leaning over the railing of the porch and looking at the youth with sparkling eyes. "Has my father seen you? Mistress Benson told me you had come back and that she was afraid father would be angry when he saw you. Aren't you afraid?"

"I've seen the Colonel," Hadley replied, smiling up at her. He remembered the anxiety in her countenance when he had last seen her looking from the window as he ran with the dispatches to escape the dragoons, and he was not so much afraid of her as he had been earlier in their acquaintance. "He wasn't very pleasant,

but the dragoons aren't in the neighborhood now, and I guess he won't try to do anything to me. You see, ma'am, most of the farmers are on my side."

"You are a terrible rebel!" declared the girl, but she still smiled down upon him. "Did you carry those dispatches 'way to—to that Mr. Washington whom you people call 'General'?"

"I went all the way with them and saw General Washington himself," declared the boy, proudly. "He is a mighty fine gentleman and the place where he stops was full of officers. All the American army are not ragamuffins," and his eyes twinkled as he thus reminded her of her criticism of the patriot soldiery on a previous occasion. "Some of the colonists know how to fight as well as hired soldiers."

"And some of them know how to run," Lillian cried.

"True. Would you have had me stand here and face that whole mob of dragoons—to say nothing of your father?"

"Oh, I didn't mean you. I think you were very smart to get away on that horse with the dispatches. And I'll tell you what father said

about it," she added, lowering her voice and glancing about her. "He said that 'if the rebel youth can fight so well and are such strategists, it is no wonder that my Lord Howe and the other generals have so little luck in bringing the uprising to a swift close.' Now, aren't you proud?"

Hadley flushed as she spoke. "I thought he was very angry with me this morning."

"Well, I think he is angry enough; but he seemed to admire your ability to beat the dragoons and get across the river as you did. I heard him and the officer in command of the troopers talking about it and they both wondered how you escaped them on the road to the ferry. Father said he had almost caught you—he could tell by the sound of your horse's feet—when the sound suddenly stopped and you disappeared as though the earth had opened and swallowed you. How did you do it?"

"You are an enemy," the boy returned, with amusement. "I couldn't tell you that, you know. Anything else—"

"Tell me what sort of a man that uncle of yours, Ephraim Morris, is?" she broke in, suddenly. "I spoke to father about him, and he

L. of C.

said he must be the man he has come here to see."

"Uncle Ephraim is an old man. He came here from England years ago. I don't know much about it, only I know that after my father died mother and I came over here to live with him, because he sent for us. He—he is very close with money, and did not treat my mother very liberally."

"And he makes you work, too?"

"Well, I'm old enough to work," Hadley said, laughing again. "I don't know any boys around here who don't work."

"Is your uncle poor?"

"I don't think so. But he lives very poorly. I'd much rather live here at the inn than work on the farm. He never fed us very well."

"Then he's a miser," said Lillian.

"That's what the neighbors call him. He isn't liked very well. He's a king's man, you know—a Tory."

"Oh! that's something in his favor," she declared.

"So I thought you'd say," he replied, shouldering his rake and broom and preparing to return to the stableyard. "I didn't want

you to have too bad an opinion of Uncle Ephraim."

"If he is the person my father is looking for, I have a very bad opinion of him, indeed, and his being for the king will make little difference one way or another."

Her words disturbed Hadley when he thought them over. They seemed to convey a threat against Uncle Ephraim, and the boy wondered what was the foundation of the dislike the Colonel's daughter plainly showed for the Ephraim Morris whom her father had come into Jersey to find? The more he thought of this mystery the more troubled he became, and in the afternoon he asked leave of Jonas to spend the night at his uncle's farm, setting out for his destination before supper time. He rather shrank from his expected interview with Miser Morris just then, for he knew the old man would be very much vexed with him for riding to the headquarters of the American army with the dispatches intrusted to him by the wounded courier. He braved Uncle Ephraim's displeasure, however, because of his curiosity regarding the connection between his uncle and Colonel Creston Knowles. Hadley was not at all sure

in his own mind what manner of person this English officer was. Mistress Lillian was a beautiful girl, and seemed kindly disposed toward him personally; but she was quite bitter against his uncle, and Hadley felt that he should warn him of the Colonel's contemplated visit.

The Morris pastures were nearest the Three Oaks Inn, and crossing the road where he had so fortunately escaped the dragoons by the aid of Lafe Holdness, Hadley struck into the open plain on which his uncle's cattle grazed. Ephraim Morris owned more than fifty head of cattle, and was not above selling his steers to the Americans, if he could get his price for them. His heart might be with the king's cause, but he never allowed his heart to interfere with money getting. The big pasture was dotted with clumps of trees, and while yet Hadley was some distance from the farm-house and its neighboring buildings, he saw a band of young stock stampeding wildly from the vicinity of a grove of dwarfed oaks not far away. The cattle, heads down and tails in the air, plunged across the plain at a mad pace, and Hadley was positive that they were not running without cause. The drove passed him like a whirlwind,

and in their wake came a loudly yelping cur and a person whom he very well knew, urging the dog on.

"Hold on there! What are you about?" cried Hadley, running forward. "What are you chasing the cattle for? That brute of yours will kill some of the stock."

It was Lon Alwood, and it was quite evident by Lon's expression of countenance that Hadley was the last person he had expected to meet just then. "Wh—why, I thought you had gone to join the army!" he gasped.

"I'm right here to tell you to stop chasing my uncle's cattle," returned Hadley, in disgust.

"Oh, you are, hey?" cried the other boy, with bravado. Then to the cur who had halted like his master at the appearance of Hadley: "Sic 'em, boy—sic 'em!"

Hadley grabbed a clod, and as the dog started after the fleeing steers he hurled the lump of earth with considerable force and it bounded resoundingly from the canine's ribs. The brute gave a yelp and took refuge behind its master, its interest for the moment lost in the inoffensive cattle. There it crouched and growled at Had-

ley while Lon fairly danced up and down in his rage. "What you need, Had Morris, is a sound thrashing and I'm going to give it to you right now!" declared the young Tory. "I didn't think you'd dare come back into this neighborhood after what you did the other night. If my father catches you about our boat again, or fooling with Black Sam, he'll tan your hide well for you."

"Well, I sha'n't give him the chance," Hadley returned, pleasantly. "I don't want to meet him. But don't you be foolish enough to think that you can take his place and do his work for him."

"What do you mean? Think I'm afraid of you, hey?"

"I wouldn't try any thrashing, if I were you, Lon. You know you tried it once a long time ago, and I haven't forgotten how to wrastle since then."

"That was a long time ago—and you had a lot o' your friends with you," growled Alonzo, pausing, however, when he was reminded of the occasion.

"Well, they were your friends, too," laughed Hadley. "Now you go on and let uncle's cattle

alone. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, chasing the harmless creatures. That dog of yours should be tied up. Somebody'll shoot him if you're not careful."

Hadley tried to pass on as he spoke, but young Alwood sprang before him and barred his way. "You're going to get thrashed right here and now, Had Morris!" declared he, resentfully. You haven't got any gun or pistol to help you out, and I'm not afraid of you. So look out for yourself!"

Hadley saw no way of avoiding the struggle unless he took to his heels, and he could not bring himself to do that. So he met his antagonist's charge to the best of his ability and in a moment they were locked together in a close, but far from loving embrace, while the dog ran around and around them, barking approval of its master's conduct.

CHAPTER VIII

UNCLE EPHRAIM DISPLAYS GREAT INTEREST

A KEEN remembrance of what had occurred at the ferry two nights before, and how Hadley Morris forced him to assist in poling the bateau across the river and aiding in his escape from the dragoons, spurred Lon to this act of violence. On the school playground the two boys had been rivals, but whereas their previous encounters were partly trials of skill, this struggle was in deadly earnest. Both being almost men in strength and stature, Hadley and young Alwood might have injured each other very seriously. A knowledge of how to protect one's self with the weapons Nature has provided one is a very good thing; but when that knowledge is used offensively instead of in defense, its misuse cannot be excused.

Lon made his attack in no spirit of fairness, and this was shown very quickly. The boys

had scarcely gripped each other when Lon realized that he was now no better able to cope with his rival in a wrestling bout than he was at their last encounter, months previous. The stable boy of the Three Oaks Inn was in the best of training every day of his active life. Lon was lazy and had to be fairly driven to work by his father. He had much rather roam the woods with a gun and dog, or go fishing, than do those tasks which fell to the share of the other lads of the neighborhood, and leaping and running, and frolicing with his friends in their off hours, had not hardened his muscles as Hadley's toil hardened his.

The latter obtained a good hold on his enemy, and, with a sudden squeeze, almost drove the breath out of Lon's lungs. The Tory youth gasped as he felt this example of his antagonist's strength. "Oh! oh!" he groaned. And then, kicking frantically and endeavoring to beat his antagonist in the face with his fists, cried aloud to the excited dog: "Sic 'im, sir! Go at 'im!"

The mongrel, as cruel as its master, plunged into the fray and grabbed at Hadley's leg. Fortunately the stable boy wore high riding boots, and instead of seizing the calf of his leg,

the brute sunk its teeth into the leather. The attack, however, brought Hadley to the ground, with the dog chewing at the bootleg and snarling, and Lon Alwood on top. But the under boy still hugged his human antagonist tightly to him and for the moment his brute enemy did little harm.

All the time Lon was encouraging the dog in his attack, but Hadley would not strike him. "Call off the beast and fight fair, Alwood," he said. "Call him off and try it over. This is no fair game."

Lon's only answer was a more desperate attempt to get his arms free and so strike his enemy with more precision. But the unequal contest was exhausting Hadley's strength, and he knew he could not keep his advantage for long. So, putting forth all his remaining energy, he suddenly rolled Lon over and came uppermost himself. The dog yelped loudly and let go the boot, for Hadley had managed to give him a well-placed kick at the same moment, and while the brute was recovering from this the boy broke away from Lon and sprang to his feet.

The dog, seeing its master on the ground,

growled savagely and leaped for Hadley again, this time for his throat. But the boy was ready for the attack, and the toe of his riding boot caught the animal under the jaw and sent it backward with terrific force. Lon had secured his footing, too, and seeing his canine friend so badly treated, came at Hadley with redoubled fury. The latter caught him at arms' length, and before Lon could secure any hold, threw him forcibly to the ground.

The dog happened to be in the way and his master fell flat upon him, and with sufficient force to break the animal's spine. The dog's almost human cry of agony shocked Hadley, and his anger was gone in an instant. "Oh, the poor creature!" he cried, and as Lon got up, bleeding at the nose and much bruised, Hadley knelt down beside the beast to see how badly it was hurt. But with a few spasmodic jerks of its limbs, the dog lay still; its master's fall had killed it.

Alwood, however, little interested in the death of the faithful creature, was searching about the pasture, and suddenly finding a smooth cobble, hurled it with all his might at the kneeling boy. Fortunately Hadley turned

in time to see his action and dodged the stone. He leaped up and Lon turned tail and ran to escape merited punishment for this cowardly act. "That fellow hasn't a spark of honor," thought the victor of this rather sanguinary encounter. "He can't fight fair. I'm sorry I killed his dog; but I don't believe Lon thought of the poor brute, at all. He was just mad at me and cared nothing about it. I'll have to watch out for Lon Alwood, for he'll seek to injure me, without giving fair warning, I know."

His encounter with the Tory youth had detained him until now it was growing dusk along the edges of the wood which bordered the pasture. He hurried on, and soon arrived at the outbuildings and barns belonging to his uncle. The cattle had come up to the cowyard and the cows were being milked by the hired hands, while Ephraim overlooked the feeding. If the old gentleman deprived himself of everything but the bare necessities of life, he was careful that his stock was well fed.

The men were mostly lads from neighboring farms, who went home at night, working for their monthly wage for Master Morris, because

there was not enough to do to keep them busy at home. They cordially greeted the miser's nephew, for though they were all from Tory families, Hadley was popular with them. Ephraim Morris, however, had but a cold welcome for the stable boy.

Hadley took hold, as he had always been used to doing, and assisted in finishing the chores. When the men said good-night and started homeward, he followed Ephraim Morris into the farm-house kitchen and waited for the storm to break. His uncle was a weazened little man, who dressed shabbily and walked with his head thrust forward as though he had sat at a desk the greater part of his life. But he had been a farmer ever since Hadley could remember; what his occupation was before he emigrated to the American Colonies, the boy did not know. Neither Mr. Morris, nor his own mother, had seemed fond of talking about their life in England, and Hadley was too young when he crossed the ocean to remember anything previous to that marked experience.

A meal at Uncle Ephraim's was nothing to look forward to with pleasure. The old man ate because it was necessary, and he did it

grudgingly. His supper was always mush and milk, and he never increased the quantity he allowed himself because of a visitor. He simply divided the amount between his nephew and himself, and swallowed his own share in silence.

"Well," he said, in an unpleasant voice, as he scraped out the bowl with his pewter spoon, "what have you got to say for yourself, Hadley?"

"About what, uncle?" demanded the boy.

"Oh, I've heard all about it. I let you work for that innkeeper, and this is what it comes to, hey? I thought so—I thought so! Hanging around a place like that would spoil anybody's morals. I'm surprised at you, Hadley—and your mother was a good woman."

Hadley's face flamed at that, and his eyes sparkled. "I don't see that I have done anything wrong, Uncle Ephraim. Mother, I believe, would not say I was bad. I don't believe as you do about this war—"

"War! war!" exclaimed the old man. "Don't dignify the actions of that Washington and his followers by calling it 'war.' It is a rebellion against the King of England, and the men en-

tering into it will be deservedly punished. It can end in only one way, young man—in only one way. And for you, who were born a British subject on English soil yourself, to help these rascals and adventurers along—"

"But I believe they are right, uncle, just as you believe the king and the king's men are right."

"Ha! What right has a boy of your age to have beliefs?" demanded the old man. "Boys were not so forward in my day, I'd have you know. It's the result of living in this country. The very air one breathes is tainted with the spirit of rebellion. These fools think they have a right to be free of all restraint. They have no proper regard for law and the rights of rulers."

"They do not regard the right of a ruler across the sea to govern them here," Hadley admitted. "And I believe as they do, too. Why should the Colonists be made to pay taxes to the Crown when they are not represented among the king's advisers? Many of the strongest adherents of these people whom you call rebels, would never have espoused the cause had the king been willing to allow the Colonies representation in matters of state."

"Pah! pah!" exclaimed the old man, savagely. "What does a boy like you know of such matters? You have hung about that Jonas Benson, and his inn, which is a hotbed of rebellion, so long that you talk like a lawyer. It is ruining you and I won't have a nephew of mine—"

"But Master Benson pays you my wages regularly, doesn't he?" demanded Hadley before the old man could say anything rash.

"Hem—well, I can't say but he does," admitted Uncle Ephraim, and subsided for a moment. Soon, however, he started on a new tack. "Who is this English officer who is a guest at the inn, nephew?" he asked. "It is said he is a great man from York way. And to think that you should oppose a gentleman and an officer of His Majesty's army!"

"I don't know how great a man he is," Hadley returned. "He calls himself Colonel Creston Knowles—"

The old man started and leaned forward so that his wrinkled face came within the candle-light. Wonder, and an expression which seemed like fear, slowly grew upon his countenance. "Who did you say he was?" he

demanded, his lean fingers clutching the edge of the table.

"Colonel Creston Knowles, Uncle. His daughter, Mistress Lillian, is with him. They have come into Jersey to find a family by our name, I understand. Both of them have asked me about you, sir." While he said this Hadley scrutinized Uncle Ephraim, closely. The old man was much disturbed, for he sat silent for several minutes and his face showed plainly that he was the man Colonel Knowles was so anxious to see. "Who is Colonel Knowles?" the boy asked, at length. "What does he want to see you for? Is he—is he related to us in any way?"

"No, no!" snarled the miser. "He's nothing to either you or me. I—I don't know him—I don't know him, I tell you. Now go to bed and don't disturb me with your questions."

Hadley cleared up the untidy kitchen as best he could, and then lit a tallow dip at the single candle on the table, and obeyed his uncle's behest by mounting the stairs to the loft over the room. He went to bed at once, for he was tired enough, but he could not sleep for thinking of

his uncle's strange manner and words. There was some mysterious connection between Colonel Knowles and the Morrises; but Uncle Ephraim did not intend to admit it.

Hadley fell into a doze at last, but only for a short time. The squeak of a door below aroused him and, after listening a moment and fancying all sorts of noises as one will in the night when the house is still, he crept out of bed, slipped on his outer clothes again, and tiptoed to the head of the stairs to see if his uncle had himself gone to bed. There was a faint light below and the boy was confident that the candle must be burning, for Uncle Ephraim would never leave a fire on the hearth at this time of the year.

The light flickered, too, as though it were being moved about, and disturbed by this, and not a little worried, the boy finally descended the stairs in perfect silence, intending to make sure that Uncle Ephraim was all right. Half way down the flight he could see into the kitchen, and the face of the old Dutch clock was in the range of his vision. The hands pointed to past ten o'clock, an unconscionably late hour for the old man to be astir.

Carefully going down several steps further,

he arrived where he could observe all the room, including the fireplace, and what was his astonishment to see Ephraim Morris standing upon a chair before an old brick oven built high in the chimney and which Hadley never remembered seeing opened before. It was open now, however, and the old gentleman had his head and shoulders thrust inside, as though reaching for something concealed at the extreme back of the oven.

CHAPTER IX

A MIDNIGHT BURYING

To play the rôle of eavesdropper, or "Peeping Tom," was not according to Hadley Morris's nature. He hated a sneak; but his curiosity regarding his uncle's maneuvers was for the time too strong for his ideas of what was really honorable, and instead of retreating up the stairs to the loft again, he remained where he was and watched the old gentleman. Like most substantially-built houses of that day, the Morris homestead had a great stone and brick fireplace built into the end wall, with a huge chimney up which the flames from the logs leaped on a winter's night most cheerily. They never leaped much at Uncle Ephraim's, for the old man was too careful of his woodpile; but the chimney had not been built according to the ideas of a stingy man. Perhaps Master Morris had not developed his miserly habits

when he first came to the Colonies and built this house in western Jersey.

However, there was plenty of room in the masonry to the right of the fireplace, for one of those ovens in which the pioneer housewives did all their baking. The oven was like a safe built into the chimney, and had a smooth clay floor. On this well-burned floor was laid "fat-wood" in stacks, and after the wood was entirely burned, and the floor of the oven swept clean of ashes with a turkey wing, the pies, biscuit, and other "goodies" were put in and baked in the fierce heat left in the bricks by the fire. But it had been a long time since the Morris oven had been used for any such purpose as this. Indeed, Hadley could not remember that he had ever seen the door open before, and Uncle Ephraim had always kept it fastened with an old-fashioned brass padlock.

The padlock now lay on the floor, and as Hadley continued to peer into the wide kitchen from around the corner of the door-frame, he saw Master Morris draw back from the mouth of the oven, holding a bag in each hand. The bags were not large, but by the way his uncle carried them, the boy knew they were heavy,

and when the old man stepped down from the chair and laid them on the table, the listener heard a faint chink as though of metal. "It's gold!" whispered the boy to himself, and his eyes opened even more widely at the thought.

Without much doubt he had unexpectedly come upon Uncle Ephraim's secret hiding-place for his wealth. That he had money laid away, the nephew knew; but he had supposed it in the bank, or some such place of safety. Perhaps, however, the troublous times had made Uncle Ephraim wary of the bankers, and he had undertaken to keep guard of his money himself. Back the old man climbed upon the heavy chair, and reaching into the oven again drew forth still another pair of bags, both as heavy as the first two. He placed them on the table also, went to the chimney, closed and locked the oven door, and moved the chair away from before it.

Then for the first time Hadley saw that Master Morris wore his waistcoat and coat as though he were ready to go out of doors. He put on his hat at once, stuck the half-burned candle in a lantern, and with the latter swung over his arm and two of the heavy bags in each

hand, he left the house. Hadley hesitated only a moment; then, curiosity still spurring him, he ran lightly down the remaining steps into the kitchen and followed his uncle out of doors without stopping for his own hat. The night was mild and not at all dark, but the boy might have found some difficulty in following the old man, had it not been for the flickering lantern which swung from his arm. This dancing will-o'-the-wisp led him down behind the barns and cribs and directly into the orchard, where the branches of the gnarled old apple trees met, and, with their fruit and foliage, shut out most of the starlight.

Hadley crept near cautiously when he saw that Uncle Ephraim had halted and set the light upon the ground. Soon he discovered that the old man had been here before since he went to bed, for there was a shovel and a heap of earth in plain view. He watched his uncle and saw him drop the four bags into what appeared to be a rather deep hole, then place a flat stone on top of them, and afterward fill in the hole with the soil and stamp it all down with care. There was considerable soil left then and the old man carried this away shovelful by shovelful and

threw it into a ditch at the far edge of the orchard. Afterward he replaced the sod which he had earlier removed, patting it all down evenly with the flat of his shovel. The burying was completed, and marking the spot well for future reference, Hadley ran back to the house and climbed to the loft and was nicely in bed again before the old man returned to the kitchen.

But the strangeness of the whole matter kept the boy awake long after he was sure his uncle had sought his own couch. "There is something wrong in all this," he told himself. "I hate to think Uncle Ephraim dishonest, but I am very sure the fact that this Colonel Knowles is in the neighborhood has made him hide those bags. I know they contain coin; nothing else could be so heavy and give out such a sound. And what a lot of money it must be! Is it possible that Uncle Ephraim was dishonest in England and stole some of that money from this British officer? If I dared I'd just ask Colonel Knowles to tell me his side of the story. Uncle won't tell me his—of that I'm pretty sure. Maybe Mistress Lillian would tell me if I assured her that I was not upholding my uncle in any wrong doing. But—but that would seem

like treachery to Uncle Ephraim. I know he's stingy and mean in money matters; but I always thought him honest, and why should I take the word of strangers against his character?"

But this was poor comfort, and he could not compose his mind to sleep, and was glad when at length the cocks crew to announce the gray light in the east. He arose and went back to the Three Oaks without again seeing Uncle Ephraim, and tried to forget the incident of the night in his work about the inn. But when he saw Colonel Creston Knowles ride off with William toward the Morris farm soon after breakfast, Hadley wished that he had remained longer with his uncle and so been present at the interview which was about to take place between the old man and the British officer.

Lillian avoided him that day, seemingly, and Hadley went about his duties with much trouble at his heart. It was after noon when Colonel Knowles and his henchman returned, and a glance at the officer's face told Hadley that the gentleman was in a towering rage. The boy was in the stable door when the two rode in, William keeping unobtrusively in the rear, and as the Colonel leaped down from his black

charger he saw the boy and muttered angrily: "Another of that Morris breed!" It made Hadley flush all over, but more than ever was he convinced that Uncle Ephraim had injured Colonel Knowles and his daughter in some mysterious way.

He did his best to obtain from William some account of what had occurred at the farm; but the Cockney either knew nothing of the interview, or had been warned not to talk, and the boy was forced to give it up. Later when he was called into the house by Dame Benson to perform some task too heavy for the maids, Lillian Knowles swept by him with averted eyes, so he knew then that he was to be included in her dislike of anybody by his name. This fact hurt him more than he was willing to show, and for the remainder of that day and the next he was very careful to keep out of the girl's sight.

Then something occurred which succeeded in driving this mystery into the background of the boy's mind. News from Philadelphia had been scarce since his return from the Pennsylvania side of the river; but after supper that evening a man rode up to the inn on a fagged-

out horse, and told them that the army under Washington was on the move and was marching toward Philadelphia, as it was believed Lord Howe's fleet would land troops to attack the city where Congress was then in session. The man obtained a fresh mount and rode on into the east, having secret business in that direction.

That night while Jonas Benson and Hadley sat together in the chimneyplace of the inn kitchen (much to the disturbance of Mistress Benson), talking over the possibilities of the battle which must occur before long, the heralding squeak of Lafe Holdness' wagon axles reached their ears, the outer door being ajar.

"Run, open the gate for him, Had!" exclaimed Benson. Mistress, put down something to heat for a hungry man, and I warrant you Lafe will do justice to it."

His wife grumblingly opined that a cold supper was good enough for a man like Lafe Holdness; but she nevertheless obeyed her husband's behest. "If I don't get these Britishers out of the Three Oaks before long you'll be running away to join the king's men yourself, mother!" exclaimed Jonas, and then quickly went outside himself to escape the lash of his wife's tongue.

Meanwhile the heavy, low-bodied wagon had turned into the inn yard and Lafe's nasal tones, as he talked to his horses, rose above the welcoming bark of the collie and the whinnying of the horses in the stable who recognized the coming of equine friends.

"Stan' round ther, you!" exclaimed Lafe. 'Ef ye want suthin' ter eat why don't ye stan' still so't I kin unbuckle this strap? Hello Had Morris! is that air yeou? I didn't 'spect ter see yeou ag'in this side o' the river till the war was over," and the Yankee chuckled mightily and dug the boy good-naturedly in the ribs. "Them Britishers about here yet, Jonas?"

"Sh!" warned Benson, sure that Colonel Knowles or William would be within ear-shot. "The officer and his man and daughter are here, Lafe."

"And Had, too! Well, well!" exclaimed the teamster. "Guess there ain't no dragoons in these parts neow, hey?"

"No, they have gone."

"An' mighty lucky for them they did," Lafe remarked, leading one of the horses into the barn. "I hear there was a party of jolly farmer lads up north of us was reckonin' on goin' over to

the Mills an' gobbling up Major Malcolm an' his whole troop. Too bad they got wind of it. Them Britishers rode some purty fine critters an' hosses would ha' come handy over near Philadelphy jest now."

"We heard to-night the army was on the move, Lafe," Jonas said, following him into the barn and speaking low.

Lafe dropped for the moment his bantering tone and spoke seriously. "There's going to be somethin' done purty soon, friends—somethin' big! There's sure to be a battle. Howe's fleet is comin' up Chesapeake Bay and Gineral Washington will meet the troops he lands somewhere south of Philadelphia; but we ain't got much more'n ten thousand men, all told."

"How many sailed from York?" queried the innkeeper.

"The Lord—that is, Lord Howe—only knows!" returned Lafe, ruefully, yet unable to quell his propensity for joking. "Them dispatches Had took over ter Germantown didn't give the exact figgers. But I'm out this way sendin' in all the scatterin' men that hev got guns. There won't much happen hereabout until the two armies meet."

"But the Tories may make us trouble," suggested Benson.

"I dunno. A Tory is a wary bird, I reckon. He'll wait till he sees how the battle goes b'fore he gits uppish. If aour side wins, the king's friends will be pretty sure that the farmers'll come home an' repay in full everything that's been done while they was gone. And speakin' about Had," added Lafe, suddenly, "I'm wantin' ter use him, Jonas."

"Well," remarked the innkeeper, with twinkling eyes, "he's a pretty valuable boy to me. I have to pay his uncle for him, too."

"You'd oughter be called Judas Benson!" declared the Yankee. "You're a great feller ter haggle over the wage of a 'prentice boy. I'm goin' ter send him to the army—it's at Philadelphia now."

"And that means I'll likely lose a good horse as well as the boy," grumbled Jonas.

"Don't you think I've got anything to say about it myself?" demanded Hadley of the Yankee.

"Not much. I've got orders for you," he declared, nodding his head. "See here." He drew a battered wallet from his pocket, and in

the light of the innkeeper's lantern selected a slip of paper from one of the compartments. This he displayed before the wondering eyes of both Jonas and Hadley. On the paper was written in a rather cramped and formal hand :—

"Send back the boy from the Three Oaks Inn with any message.

"CADWALADER."

"Why!" exclaimed the round-eyed innkeeper, "that's the man who saved you from the soldiers, Had—Colonel Cadwalader."

"I reckon ye must ha' got purty thick with Master Cadwalader, Had," said Lafe, tearing the paper into small pieces. "Let me tell yeou he is in the Gineral's confidence as much as old Knox or Colonel Pickering. I got sumthin' important for yeou to take to headquarters, an' if yeou had your supper, yeou'd better saddle a hoss an' git away with it purty soon. The quicker ye start the sooner ye'll ketch the army, for it's on the move."

While he was speaking, Jonas Benson was already leading Black Molly out of her stall, showing at once that his objection to the boy's departure had been but momentary. "He's

had his supper, and he can git right out now," he declared.

But Hadley waited long enough to go into the loft and put on the best suit of homespun which he possessed, and encased his legs in long riding boots with a pair of tiny spurs screwed into the heels. There were no papers to take this time, for Lafe Holdness whispered the message he had to send into the boy's attentive ear. "An' now good luck to ye!" exclaimed the scout, as the youth mounted into the saddle and Jonas opened the stable door. "Nobody can take nothin' from ye this time, but mebbe it's just as well if yeou dodge all armed men of airy complection till ye pass Germantown."

Black Molly trotted quietly down the inn yard toward the gate. Just as she was going through this, and her rider was about to give her the rein, he was startled by a soft "S-s-st!" beside him. He turned his head quickly and drew Molly down to a walk. A shadowy figure stood at the end of the porch. In an instant Hadley recognized Lillian Knowles, with a light shawl flung over her head and shoulders, and her hand outstretched to him.

"Hadley Morris," she whispered; "if you

are carrying anything—anything you don't want other folks to see—look out! There are others besides me who know you are riding toward the ferry to-night." And then, before he could reply or express his astonishment at her warning, she slipped away and disappeared into the inn. He heard the door close softly behind her, and, after a moment's hesitation, he started Molly on again, and pointed her nose for the distant ferry, wondering if he ought to take the girl's words seriously and turn back for reinforcements.

CHAPTER X

THE LANDING OF THE ENEMY

As Lafe Holdness said, the enemy could take nothing from the boy courier on this journey—nothing of information or papers of value; but the possibility of being waylaid and beaten, perhaps killed, was not pleasant to contemplate. Hadley could scarcely understand the veiled warning he had received from Lillian Knowles. Was her father about to stop him on the road, believing that he again carried documents of importance to the American forces? He did not wish to fall into Colonel Creston Knowles' hands just then, for the latter was angry enough with him as it was, and Hadley did not care to add to his irritation.

It might be, however, that somebody else had overheard the recent conference in the inn stable, and Lillian was cognizant of the fact. Some Tory visitor, perhaps, knew of his starting

HE CROUCHED AND LISTENED TO THE DIALOGUE

forth. He drew rein again in the shadow of a long pile of cord-wood which bordered the wall of the Benson estate and felt in the darkness for a stout club, heavy enough to do a man's head serious damage, but not too clumsy for him to swing easily. Then he chirruped to Black Molly and she trotted on, her master keeping his eyes sharply open for trouble.

He was too proud to ride back and ask Lafe to come with him; Hadley did not lack personal courage; but he was nevertheless all of a tremor as the little mare trotted over the hard road. He gripped the club nervously and tried to pierce the gloom, which was thickest, of course, under the trees which bordered the road. He was taking the shortest road to the ferry, to-night, for there was no trouble to be apprehended there from British soldiers, and he would be sure to get quick transportation to the other side, for the people at the ferry were loyal. He would not have gone around by the Alwood house again for a good deal. Rod after rod the inn was left behind and Black Molly had now brought him quite a quarter of a mile from the Benson place. There were no other houses on this road, until he passed the Morris pastures,

where he had his unpleasant meeting with Lon Alwood, the day before. The mare footed it nicely over the road until now; but suddenly she threw up her head, her quivering ears pointed forward—Had could see them as dark as the night was—as though she listened to some sound too faint for her rider's dull hearing to catch.

"What is it, Molly?" the youth demanded, holding a tight rein and gripping the club more firmly than before.

Instantly a harsh voice addressed him out of the darkness. "Stand there and deliver!" At the same instant a figure sprang before the little mare and her bridle was seized by a firm hand. "Don't make her dance!" ordered the stranger; "for if you do I'll put a ball through her head and perhaps one through you."

Hadley saw that the speaker waved a big horsepistol in his other hand and he spoke quietingly to Molly. "What do you want?" he demanded, in as brave a tone as he could assume.

"Give me what you carry," commanded the other, still speaking gruffly. Hadley felt sure that it was a disguised voice, and remembering

what Lillian Knowles had said to him as he left the inn, he wondered who the person was who had halted him. "No slippery tricks, Had Morris!" growled he at the horse's head. "Hand me the papers you carry. Give me what you've got." But the strain of disguising his voice grew too much for the fellow, and as he talked he unconsciously dropped back into his usual manner of speaking. At once Hadley, although he was still unable to see his face, knew that it was Lon Alwood who had stopped him. And he was puzzled by the discovery, for he wondered how Mistress Lillian could have known of the Tory youth's intention.

His mind did not work in one direction alone, however. Before Alwood had reiterated his demand Hadley was preparing to make answer. "You want what I carry?" he cried. "Then take it!" and swinging up the club suddenly he brought it down again upon the shoulder of his enemy. Lon roared and dropped both the pistol and the mare's bridle rein; but Hadley did did not come out of the affray without trouble.

Black Molly was startled by the blow and darted to the side of the road. Before her youthful rider could pull her in, she was in the

ditch and only her quickness saved her from a disastrous fall. As she slid down the steep side of the gulley Had slipped his feet from the stirrups and leaped to the ground. Lon, with many imprecations and threats, groped about the dark roadway and finally found the pistol. He was maddened beyond all control now and plainly beholding Hadley's bulk—where he stood on the edge of the ditch urging the mare out upon the level again—he aimed the weapon and would have fired at his old school fellow point blank!

But before his finger pressed the trigger a third actor appeared upon the scene. A man sprang from the bushes on the far side of the road and in two strides was beside the Tory. He seized Alwood's arm and the pistol ball flew wide of its intended mark.

At the moment the shot was fired Hadley had managed to half drag Black Molly from the ditch. His quick side glance saw the danger and he sprang for the steed's back; the explosion of the heavy pistol frightened Black Molly again, and before her rider was firmly settled in the saddle she was off like the wind. He obtained, however, another swift glance at the two figures struggling in the roadway behind him,

just as the second barrel of the weapon was exploded. The flash lit up the scene and with astonishment Hadley saw the person who had saved him to be Colonel Knowles' Cockney servant.

He and Molly were a good mile further on their way, however, before he had time to think much of this surprising fact, for the little mare ran like a scared rabbit. "Who could have sent the man to help me?" he thought, when Molly had finally settled into a respectable pace. "Surely not his master; and Mistress Lillian—"

To believe that the Colonel's daughter had done him this favor—had sent William to assist him in overcoming the Tory youth—was rather pleasant; yet it seemed too improbable to be true, and he wondered much as he rode swiftly on to the ferry. There was no trouble in crossing the river on this night. He found fires burning on the banks and the ferrymen were wide awake. There was considerable bustle at the landing and Hadley learned that several parties bound for Philadelphia had gone over ahead of him and that others were expected. The loyal Jersey farmers and farmers' sons were

hastening to join General Washington, eager to take part in this new movement against the enemy. The boy was not delayed or molested in any way, and once on the Pennsylvania shore he urged the little mare to top speed, passing party after party of recruits, all hastening in the same direction.

Not long past midnight he reached the farmer's at which he had previously changed horses. The man remembered him and, thanks to Hadley's first appearance there under Colonel Cadwalader's protection, the youth was enabled to get a fresh mount on this occasion. The farmer, too, was able to give him reliable information about the movements of the American forces.

"You will not find His Excellency at Germantown," the farmer declared. "Aye, an' ye'll not catch him at Philadelphia, I'm thinkin'. The Redcoats are coming up the Chesapeake an' the army's movin' south to shelter the city from attack." Then followed directions relating to cross-roads and bridle paths by following which he might overtake the army on its way to Wilmington.

Without waiting for sleep, but fortified with

a hearty meal which the farmer's wife prepared, Hadley set off again within the hour on a fresh mount. He was weary, saddle-sore, and parched by the August heat. But he was obeying orders, and although he did not understand the importance of the verbal message Holdness had given him for Colonel Cadwalader, the youth knew what his duty was. He could not foresee what was to happen and what sights he should witness before he again rode into the yard of the Three Oaks Inn. The people whom he passed (the Tory element was not in evidence) were very cheerful regarding the battle which they believed would be fought as soon as Lord Howe's troops landed. Despair and inaction had held the Colonials in a hard grip during these past few months, but now there was a chance to do something, and the farmers were again hopeful.

While Hadley Morris was riding hard over the dusty roads to overtake Washington's personal staff on this twenty-fourth day of August, the American army, augmented by fresh recruits, and some eleven thousand strong, marched through the length of Front Street. Philadelphia had seen some gloomy days of late, but

the appearance of so many armed men was calculated to raise the spirits of the populace a little; yet it is said that the cheering along the line of march lacked that inspiring quality with which a conquering army usually goes to battle. It was known that they were about to meet an enemy well trained and seasoned, and, in addition, outnumbering them by several thousands.

Philadelphia had from the beginning of the war been the headquarters of rebellion, and the British were determined to humble the city. How could Washington's forces hope to cope with men who had fought on half the battlefields of Europe? It had been a handful of untrained farmers, however, who had beaten back the grenadiers at Bunker Hill; and it could scarcely be called a trained army that had driven the Redcoats finally out of Boston town.

It was long past mid-afternoon when Hadley overtook the rear guard of the American army. It was no easy matter to find the commander and his staff, and, when found, to select Colonel Cadwalader from the other officers and get near enough to him to deliver the message he car-

ried. But the instant the officer saw and recognized the youth, he graciously called him near. Evidently Lafe Holdness' message, which had been a mystery to Had, because he did not understand what the seemingly simple sentence meant, was most important, for Colonel Cadwalader hurried off at once to General Washington, bidding the boy remain with the column until he returned.

When he did return there was with him the young officer who had desired Hadley as a recruit on the day he brought dispatches to the Commander-in-chief at Germantown. "I cannot let you go back just yet, Master Morris," Colonel Cadwalader declared; "I may have work for you to do later. Meanwhile, I shall place you in Captain Prentice's care," and he indicated the smiling subordinate officer. "You are not obliged to fight, if it be against your conscience; but you may see some fighting before you return to Jersey."

He wheeled his horse and rode away again, and Captain Prentice offered the youth his hand. "Leave the nag, Morris," he said, cordially, "and take your place with 'Foot and Leggets'' company. Your horse seems about

done for, anyway, and you will be able to pick up a better one when you return. You're to go with me, and I am in the infantry."

And so, rather unexpectedly, Hadley found himself marching with the patriot forces toward Wilmington. Captain Prentice found him a gun and he shared the rations of the good-natured fellows about him. The youth was very tired after his long ride, but walking was better than riding, and there were times when the ranks rested. The next day, however, the army reached the Delaware town, only to learn through the scouts that the British had landed at the head of the Elk River, fifty miles or more from Philadelphia. The news spread, too, how greatly the Redcoats outnumbered the Americans; there were eighteen thousand of the former, and the faces of even the rank and file grew grave.

The Americans marched to Red Clay Creek, beyond Wilmington, and for several days there were smart skirmishes between portions of the two armies. But there was no decisive engagement, and finally Washington outgeneraled Howe and fell back upon the Brandywine, which he crossed at Chadd's Ford, posting his

army on the hills to the east. Meanwhile Captain Prentice's command had seen little fighting, and both the young officer and Hadley Morris were anxious to get closer to the firing line than they had been thus far.

Hadley had forgotten his original expectation of returning at once to the Three Oaks Inn, after having delivered his message to Colonel Cadwalader; and it looked as though the colonel had forgotten him. But he was so excited by the prospect of a battle that he was not chafing over the delay of his return journey. Without doubt a fight was imminent, the commanders of the opposing forces maneuvering for the best position for their line of battle.

Thus August slipped away, September came, and the fateful eleventh day of the latter month approached.

CHAPTER XI

A MESSENGER OF DEFEAT

In the excitement of those September days when the two armies overran the Pennsylvania hills to the west and south of Philadelphia, Hadley came near forgetting his Uncle Ephraim and the promise he had made his mother regarding the old man. Miser Morris had so repelled his nephew's kindly efforts to help him, that the boy felt he was no more able to do him any good while at the Three Oaks than he was miles away from the Morris farm in the lines of the Continental troops. And then, the glamour of the life—the drilling, the marching, the uncertainty, the danger—all fed his imagination and inspired him with actual delight. Prentice, the young captain in whose charge Colonel Cadwalder had placed the youth, declared almost hourly that Hadley was "spoiling a good officer by hanging about a country inn."

"I don't feel that I could regularly enlist," the boy said to him, "so I am not likely to be an officer yet awhile. I am here now only as a volunteer, and my conscience troubles me, too, at that."

But all things end in their own good time, and the long wait which ensued after the landing of the British finally was closed on the morning of September 11th. Captain Prentice's command had not even tasted a skirmish until that day; but Hadley—nor the captain himself—could find no fault with the position they occupied during the fearful hours which followed the first gun of attack. Hadley was eager to see a general engagement, to see the armies charge each other and try their strength upon a real battlefield, instead of individual men snapping their muskets at one another in little skirmishes. Before the end of that day he could not realize what awful motive had ever urged such a foolish desire in his heart.

He saw men lying dead upon the browning hillsides; he heard wounded horses screaming in their death agony; the earth shook with the discharge of the heavy guns; the crackling of the musketry fire deafened him. The fife and

drums, the uniformed officers, the marching soldiery made no appeal to Hadley Morris now. Wounds and death were all about him and fear gripped his heart like a vise. Time and again as he heard the shriek of the bullets over his head he could have fainted, or run away in abject terror, had he dared! But the thought of being considered a coward frightened him even more, and he stayed.

Once, when there was a lull of heavy firing on both sides, a strange sound reached his ears. Captain Prentice's command was somewhat above and to one side of the main line of battle, and this sound, growing louder and more ear-piercing as the strange silence continued, had such an eerie effect upon the listener that Hadley actually shook with a nervous chill, without knowing what caused it. The sound was little more than a murmur—yet a very insistent, penetrating murmur.

"What is it?" Hadley whispered to the man who stood next him in the broken line.

"The cries of the wounded," was the stern reply, and the boy was glad when a renewal of the conflict drowned the awful sound.

No history fittingly tells the story of that

day's struggle—the high hopes with which the battle was begun by the Americans, the determined, dogged resistance they offered the British soldiery. Yet its salient points are familiar enough. We do not like to speak at length upon the defeats of our arms even in that unequal war. But without doubt, had not Sullivan blundered and lost to the American cause a good twelve hundred men, the Battle of the Brandywine would have been placed upon the list of American victories.

Hadley saw the patriot army driven back, and as they retreated he observed many of the men weeping like women at the thought of flying before an enemy which they had practically held in check since early morning. Captain Prentice, who had been recklessly courageous during the engagement, was wounded, yet still kept on the firing line with his arm and shoulder swathed in bandages. As they broke into the final disorderly retreat an aide galloped up to the young captain and said a word to him.

"Morris!" exclaimed Prentice, "follow this man to Colonel Cadwalder. He wants you. All's lost here, anyway; there's nothing more to be done."

Hadley threw down his musket and ran beside the aide's stirrup along the dusty road for nearly a quarter of a mile before overtaking the group of officers of which Colonel Cadwalader was the centre. The Colonel sat his horse firmly, and, despite the creature's dancing, was writing rapidly on the pommel of his saddle.

"Morris," he said, scarcely glancing at the youth, "it is over for to-day. You are not kept here with Captain Prentice by any enlistment, I believe?"

"No, sir."

"Then you can go back if you wish—you can go home. We shall retreat, and whether his Excellency secures another such chance to meet the enemy soon, remains to be seen. It is an awful thing—an awful thing! But that is not why I called you. There is a fresh horse yonder being held for you. Here branches the road to Philadelphia. You will not be molested, for the British have not yet crossed it—though we're not sure they'll not throw a column out between us and the city.

"This letter goes to Holdness at the Indian Queen Tavern, in Fourth Street—anybody will

direct you. Then, when it is delivered, you may follow your own wishes, Master Morris," and the gentleman leaned down and dropped the unsealed note into the boy's hand with a grave smile. "Leave the horse where you exchanged steeds before on the Germantown pike —you already have a horse there, have you not?"

"I left one there, sir."

"Very well. Now, off with you! I shall see you anon—and hear more of you to your credit, I believe." And with a wave of his hand Colonel Cadwalader dismissed him.

Together with the men beside whom he had fought, Hadley was nigh heartbroken over the result of the battle. The retreat was almost a rout in some parts of the field. The boy sprang upon the horse held by an orderly and at once dashed away through the broken lines, and soon left the disorganized army behind. It was a bitter hour, and, young as he was, the youth felt it keenly. How would he be greeted in the city toward which he was carrying the news of the battle? He could imagine with what despair the result of the struggle would be received.

But he could not imagine all that had occurred in the capital during the hours of that fateful day. The days of anxiety and suspense which had followed the landing of the enemy culminated that morning when the distant booming of heavy guns announced the beginning of a general engagement in the southwest. At the first cannon shot many people left their houses and collected in the streets, and all day long their straining ears listened to the thunderous muttering of the guns. About six o'clock it died away, but the groups in the street still listened and waited. The sun set, and supper-time came and went unnoticed by those still remaining in the Quaker city.

Naturally there were not any great number of male adults, excepting the old men, or those burdened by family or business cares which actually forbade their being in the ranks of the patriot army. Of course, there were a few Tories left, but they were not active as had been Joseph Galloway and the Allens before they were banished from the town. There were no young men—only boys and children hanging on the skirts of the various groups about the State House, or listening to the

remarks of the wise ones gathered before the doors of the houses of public entertainment.

The women, too, whispered on their doorsteps to each other or craned their necks out of the darkened windows to look nervously along the street. The sound of the guns had brought that grim, horrible thing called war so much nearer to them than it had ever been before.

About eight o'clock there was some little disturbance at one of the inns called the Old Coffee House, where the story gained credit that Washington had won a victory, and some few began to cheer. But there was no authority behind the story and the enthusiasm died out, and by nine o'clock the suspense was actually painful.

At last, far out Chestnut Street toward the distant Schuylkill, there rose the sound of rapid hoof-beats. As the approaching horseman tore down the street voices rose and hailed him as he passed, and soon the clamor grew to a roar which roused the town for blocks around. The people ran together toward the State House, and saw a youth on a foam-flecked horse, covered with dust, and exhausted, riding hard along the rough way.

Once he drew rein for a moment to inquire the way again to the Indian Queen; but he refused to answer any questions until he had ridden around into Fourth Street and stopped before the door of the old hostelry.

"Had Morris!" exclaimed a voice in the crowd which poured out of the place, and the lank figure of Lafe Holdness pushed through the throng and helped the boy from the saddle.

"What's the news? Tell us of the battle!" cried the crowd. "What does the lad bring?"

Hadley thrust Colonel Cadwalader's letter into the scout's hand first. Then he said weakly to the anxious citizens: "There has been a battle fought to-day; but there are plenty of stragglers to tell you of it. There is another messenger in town already—he can tell you better than I."

"But is it defeat or victory?" somebody cried.

"The army has been beaten—I don't know how badly. They say somebody blundered and General Washington is obliged to fall back. The French Marquis was wounded—I was told seriously. The army is marching northward and there will be plenty of stragglers here soon."

Then he clutched Holdness by his sleeve. "Get me a bed, Lafe. I am nearly dead with riding so far, on top of all that's been done to-day. And I have no money."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed the Yankee. "Never mind money here, lad. Ye'll be well entertained—I'll speak to somebody about ye. But I must be off myself at once."

And in ten minutes Hadley was alone in a little room at the top of the house, anxious to rest after his toilsome ride, while Holdness was away on some business connected with Colonel Cadwalader's note. The city was, however, in a tumult. Hadley's news had now been verified by a dozen other messengers of ill tidings, and few in Philadelphia that night believed that Washington could successfully oppose the enemy again before Howe threw his troops upon the city itself.

Indeed, when Hadley appeared in the street the next morning to mount his horse brought around by the stableman, the same groups of excited citizens seemed to surround the Indian Queen which had been there the night before when he arrived. As far as he could learn, everybody seemed to believe that the city was

doomed to capture by the British and that the defeat of Brandywine could not be retrieved. A night's sleep, however, had renewed Hadley's courage as well as refreshed his body. When he clattered out of town, following the road northward toward Germantown, he drew in, with every breath of the fresh morning air, the feeling that all was not yet lost. He remembered how bravely his comrades had fought the day before; how reluctant they had been to fall back, even when commanded to do so. He thought of General Washington himself and a mental picture of His Excellency's stern, firmly-lined face rose before him. That was not a man to give up—nor would General Knox, nor Wayne, nor Colonel Cadwalader, nor even young Captain Prentice! Before he reached the farmhouse where he had left his horse he was confident that Philadelphia would not be given over to the enemy without a second struggle.

And with that belief another idea entered the boy's mind. He had experienced a real battle. It had frightened him, and the thoughts of some of the awful things he had seen and heard still troubled his mind; but he felt that now, when he had been initiated in war's alarms, it was too

bad that he should not remain and fight again when the patriots tried to keep the enemy out of the city.

"I'll go home as quick as ever I can and beg Uncle to let me go—he must let me enlist!" the boy thought. "Anyway, if he says 'no,' I'll go just as I did this time, find a gun, and stay as long as the battle's on. I know Jonas won't care."

He came again to the ferry and crossed it at night, Black Molly (he had found her in good condition at the farmer's) apparently as eager to be home as himself. The news of the disastrous battle had preceded him, and everywhere Hadley was met by anxious inquiries. He met no Tories, for most of them had gone to join the British forces; but the American farmers had again lost hope. As he was poled across the river one of the ferrymen said to him: "Morris, ye'd best watch sharply as ye go along home. It is reported that a party of Tories crossed below here not two hours ago. They used old Alwood's bateau and Brace Alwood is with them. They're meaning no good to folks, I take it."

"I thought all the Tories would be with the king's men," said the boy. "I heard on the

road that they've swore to march into Philadelphia with the redcoats when the city is captured."

"Well, Brace has got business of some kind over here—and it isn't any good business, I'll be bound. You'd better warn Jonas. They may come to the inn."

Hadley was somewhat troubled by this information. Brace Alwood had been a wild young man before the war broke out and had incurred the enmity of many of the neighbors. It was reported that since he had joined the British he had given full sway to his evil passions and that he was noted among the Tory hangers-on of the King's troops for his cruelty and bitter enmity against the patriots. He had obtained some petty office in the army, and now, with others, perhaps as brutal as himself, had come into his own neighborhood for no good purpose. Surely if he had crossed the river merely to visit his father and mother, he would not have brought a troop with him.

But Hadley saw nobody on the road until he came abreast of his uncle's property. Then he did not see any man, but a light in a clump of trees some distance back from the horse-path, and

in Miser Morris's pasture, attracted his attention. This was so strange a place for a fire (for a fire it was Hadley could tell by the intermittent leaping and fading of the light) that he could not go by without investigating, and after riding Black Molly a few rods beyond the grove in question, he dismounted, tied her to a fence rail, and crept over to reconnoitre.

There was a campfire in the middle of the clump of trees. It was well hidden from the house and outbuildings and scarcely discernible from the highway. But when he got into the edge of the grove Hadley saw with surprise that although the fire was small, there was a good-sized company about the blaze. He counted eight heavily armed and roughly dressed men lying about the fire, but Brace Alwood, Lon's older brother, was not among them.

"Now, why should these fellows be roosting here?" thought the American youth, quite puzzled. "Of course, they know that most of our men are away now with the army, and have they really come over here to harass the unprotected homesteads? If they have, and if they trouble the farmers' wives, it will be too hot about here

for the Alwoods to stay when the men do come back."

A crackling in the bushes startled him, and he crouched lower. The Tories seemed so sure of their position that they did not keep a guard, and now two other figures came rapidly into the circle of the firelight, Hadley noticing that their approach was from the direction of his uncle's house. An instant later he recognized Brace Alwood, the probable leader of this party of bushwhackers. He was grown much older looking since he had left home, and his bronzed face was covered by a tangled growth of beard. His companion he held by the arm, and Hadley saw that it was Alonzo.

"Here he is, boys," declared Brace, with a laugh. "He's young, but he's sharp—a reg-'lar fox for cunning. I found him watching the premises yonder, and he tells me everybody's gone for the night and the old man is in the house. All we got to do is to wait an hour or so till things get thoroughly quicted down, and then make our call. Miser Morris'll be glad to see us, eh?" and the fellow laughed unpleasantly.

CHAPTER XII

HADLEY GETS BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH COLONEL KNOWLES

THE words Brace Alwood uttered were enough to rivet Hadley to the spot, and almost within a long arm reach of the men lounging about the fire he crouched, and listened to the dialogue which followed. The reason stated by Brace for the presence of the Tories in this place naturally startled and horrified Ephraim Morris's nephew. When the old man was well known to be a strong royalist, why should these fellows be plotting to attack him? At once Hadley was sure that they were after the money which rumor said Miser Morris kept concealed in his house.

Remembering the incident of the night at his uncle's house, Hadley doubted if the men would gain what they had hoped for; but Uncle Ephraim was old and alone, and there was no

telling what these rough fellows might do to gain their ends.

"You'd better make sure the old man is alone, Alwood," suggested one of the others, as Brace and his younger brother took seats in the circle around the fire. "There used to be a boy with Miser Morris—his nevvy, was it?—who might make us trouble."

Brace Alwood laughed harshly. "We ought to be a match for an old man and a boy, I reckon—though Lon, here, tells me Had is pretty sharp."

"He made me and black Sam pole him across the river one night when he was carrying dispatches to the army," Lon admitted. "An' he pretty near broke my arm just before he left these parts last, too."

"What army was he carrying dispatches to?" demanded the first speaker.

"Washington's, of course."

"But the old man is for the king, you say—worse luck!"

"That doesn't say the boy is," Brace remarked. "He's a perky lad, I reckon."

"He may do us harm, then—in slipping away and rousin' the farmers, I mean."

"He's with the army now," said Lon.

"And there's nobody with the old man?"

"Not a soul."

"Well, we'll likely have an easy time of it. If he's got as much as they say hid away in the house, this night's work will pay us fine."

"And settle some old scores, too," added Brace. "Colonel Knowles will be revenged on the old scoundrel, I reckon."

"Ah! I remember what you told us," said the first man, thoughtfully. "His Honor is too loyal a man to appear in this matter though, I take it?"

Brace laughed shortly. "No doubt—no doubt. He came here to get something out of Miser Morris; but the old fox gives nothing away—not him!"

Hadley had heard enough to assure him that the Tories were actually going to attack his uncle, Royalist though he was. With silent tread he crept away from the place, crossed the pasture to the road, and getting on Black Molly's back, sent her flying toward the inn. He was fearful for his Uncle Ephriam's safety, but it was useless for him to ride and warn the old man. He must arouse the farmers—or such

of them as were at home—and bring a band to oppose the men with Brace Alwood. There would be some lack of enthusiasm, however, when it was learned that the Tory renegades were attacking one of their own kind; it was a case of "dog eat dog," and most of the neighbors would scarce care if the old man was robbed.

But Hadley rode swiftly toward the Three Oaks Inn, determined to raise a rescuing party at all hazard. It was evening, and the men usually centered there to hear the news and talk over the war and kindred topics, and the boy was quite confident of getting some help. Besides, what he had heard while lying hidden in the grove made him believe that Colonel Creston Knowles was partly the cause of this cowardly attack by the Tories upon Uncle Ephraim, and if the British officer was still at the inn, the boy determined that he should not go unpunished for instigating the crime.

The American farmers about the inn had borne with the British officer more because he was Jonas Benson's guest than aught else. Before being sent by Lafe Holdness on the last errand to the army, Hadley knew that many of

the neighbors spoke threateningly of the British officer, who apparently knew no fear even in an enemy's country. If they should be stirred up now, after the disaster to the American forces, when feeling would be sure to run high, Colonel Knowles would find himself in very dangerous quarters. For the moment Hadley did not think of the danger to Mistress Lillian. He was only anxious for his uncle's safety, and enraged at Colonel Knowles for the part he believed the officer had in the plot to rob—and perhaps injure—the farmer.

In an hour, so Brace Alwood said, they would attack the lonely homestead of the man whom the whole countryside believed to be a miser. Hadley had good reason to know that his uncle was possessed of much wealth, whether rightfully or not did not enter into the question now; but the money was no longer in the house—of that he was confident. Enraged at not finding it, the Tories might seriously injure Ephraim Morris. With these tumultuous thoughts filling his brain, the boy rode into the inn yard, let Black Molly find her old stall herself, and was on the steps of the inn before those in the kitchen had time to open the door, aroused

though they had been by the rattle of the mare's hoofs.

"It's a courier!" cried some one. "What's the news?"

"It's that Hadley Morris!" exclamed Mistress Benson, showing little cordiality in her welcome. Jonas was not in evidence, and there were no other men in the kitchen.

"Where is Master Benson, madam?" demanded Hadley of the innkeeper's wife. "I want him to help me—and all other true men in the neighborhood. There is a party of Tories up the road yonder and they are going to attack Uncle Ephraim's house and rob him this very night."

"Tories!" gasped the maids.

"King's men!" exclaimed Mistress Benson. "And why should they wish to plague Master Morris, Hadley? He is loyal."

"That Brace Alwood is at their head. They are bent on robbery. Nobody will be safe now, if they overrun the country. Where is Master Benson, I say?"

"He is gone to Trenton," declared one of the frightened women. "There is no man here but Colonel Knowles' servant."

"Then he is here yet?" cried the boy, and pushing through the group of women he entered the long hall which ran through the inn from the kitchen to the main entrance. His coming had evidently disturbed the guests. Colonel Knowles stood in the hall by the parlor door, a candlestick held above his head that the light might be cast along the passage. His daughter, clinging to his sleeve, stood behind him.

"Whom have we here?" demanded the British officer.

"It is Hadley Morris, father!" exclaimed the girl, first to recognize the youth.

Hadley approached without fear, for his indignation was boundless. "It is I, Colonel Knowles," he said, his voice quivering with anger. "I have come back just in time to find that, unable to bring my uncle to such terms as you thought right, you have set Brace Alwood and his troup of villainous Tories upon the old man. But I tell you, sir, I will arouse the neighborhood, and if Uncle Ephraim is injured, you shall be held responsible!"

The officer took a stride forward and seized the boy by the arm. He waved the crowd of

women back. "Return to your work!" he commanded. "Mistress Benson, call William." Then he said to Hadley: "Master Morris, step into the parlor here and tell me what you mean. I am in the dark."

Hadley began to think that perhaps he had been too hasty in his judgement. He stepped within the room. He did not speak to the officer's daughter, but she stared at him with wide open, wondering eyes. Then in a few sentences he told how he had discovered the plot against his uncle.

"Who are these Alwoods?" demanded the Colonel, when he had finished.

"Alonzo Alwood is the boy who came here once to see you, father," Lillian interposed, before Hadley could reply. "Do you not remember? He told you that Master Morris was about to carry dispatches to Mr. Washington again, and asked you to help stop him in his journey."

"Ah!" exclaimed Hadley. "He did try to halt me. But your servant, sir, stopped him. Have I to thank—?"

"Mistress Lillian, sir," said the colonel, shortly, but a smile quivered about his mouth.

"I am in the enemy's country, as you advised me once, Master Morris, and I would not be a party to the young man's plan. So this Brace Alwood is his brother?"

"Yes, sir."

"And they connect my name with their raid upon that—that old man?"

"They do, sir."

"Then to prove to you, Master Morris, that I am not in their confidence, or they in mine, I will ride back with you." At this instant the manservant entered. "William, saddle my horse and one of the bays for yourself—instantly! I will join you at once, Master Morris. If you have other men in the neighborhood on whom you can depend in this emergency, arouse them."

Hadley, feeling that his impulsiveness had caused him to accuse Colonel Knowles wrongfully, ran out again without a word. While William, as silent as ever, saddled the officer's black charger and another animal for himself, the boy took the saddle off Black Molly and threw it upon one of the other horses in the stable. Then he clattered over to the nearest neighbor's house and routed out the family.

But the only men folk at home were two half grown boys, and when their mother learned that there were Tories in the neighborhood, she refused to allow them to leave her and the younger children. So he rode on to the next homestead and brought back with him to the inn but one man to join the party. Colonel Knowles and his servant were awaiting their coming in the road before the door of the Three Oaks.

"Lead on, Master Morris!" commanded the officer. "You know the way by night better than I."

"But there are only four of us," began Hadley, doubtfully.

"We can wait for no more if what you have told me is true. They will be attacking the old man by now."

The quartette rode off at a gallop and little was said until they turned into the farm path which led through the pastures and fields to the Morris homestead. Then the neighbor was riding nearest Hadley's side and he whispered: "Hey, Morris, suppose this should be a trap? Suppose the Britisher should be playing us false?"

Hadley tapped the butt of the pistol beneath

his coat. "Then he'll get what's in this first—and do you take William," the boy whispered. "But I do not believe Colonel Knowles will play us false. These Tory blackguards are nothing to him."

The ring of the horses' hoofs announced their coming before they were within shot of the house around which the rascals under Brace Alwood had assembled. But no shots were fired, for Colonel Knowles was ahead and his mount was recognized by Lon in the light of the huge bonfire which had been built in front of the farmer's door. Part of the Tories were already inside the house, ransacking the dwelling from cellar to garret, while Ephraim was tied hard and fast to one of his own chairs and Brace Alwood, with cruel delight in the farmer's terror, was threatening to hold the old man's feet in the flames on the hearth if he did not divulge the hiding place of his gold. Colonel Knowles' coming struck the entire party of marauders dumb.

"What are you doing here, you scoundrels?" exclaimed the officer, almost riding into the farmhouse in his rage, and laying about him with the riding whip he carried.

The men shrank away in confusion. Even

Brace Alwood, the bully, was cowed. "The old miser's got more money than is good for him," whined Alwood. "And his nephew is off with the rebels—"

"Sirrah!" exclaimed the Colonel, sharply. "Here is his nephew with me. And it matters not what his nephew may be, in any case; the man himself is for King George, God bless him!—or so I understand."

"Yes, yes, master!" squealed the farmer from the chair where he was tied. "I am for the king. I told these villains I was for the king. It is an outrage. I cannot help what my rascally nephew is—I am loyal."

"And as for his money," continued the Colonel, savagely, "you'd work hard and long before you got any of it—and what you got would likely not be his, but belong to those whom he has robbed!" At that Uncle Ephraim recognized his rescuer, and he relapsed into frightened silence. "Come out of that house and go about your business!" commanded the officer. "Let me not find any of you in this neighborhood in the morning; and think not I shall forget this escapade. Your colonel shall hear of it, Alwood."

Somebody released the farmer from his uncomfortable position, and he followed the bushwhackers to the door, bemoaning his fate. The men clattered out and evidently fearing the power of Colonel Knowles, hurried away toward the river. When Uncle Ephraim saw his woodpile afire he rushed out and began pulling from the flames such sticks as had only been charred, or were burning at one end, all the time railing at the misfortune that had overtaken him. The neighbor looked on a minute and then said, brusquely :

"I've little pity in my heart for such as you Neighbor Morris—a man that will take sides against his country."

"And I've little pity for you, either," Colonel Knowles declared, when the first speaker had ridden away, "for you are a dishonest old villain!"

He and William wheeled their horses and followed the bridle path back to the highway ; but Hadley, much troubled by what he had heard, remained to help put out the fire in the woodpile. His uncle did not speak to him, however, but when the last spark was quenched by the water the boy brought from the well, he

went into the house and, fairly shutting the door in his nephew's face, locked and barred it!

"Well!" muttered Hadley, "I don't need a kick to follow that hint that my company's not wanted," and he rode back to the inn, feeling very sorrowful. Evidently his uncle was angry with him, but more than all else was he troubled by the words he had heard Colonel Knowles address to Ephraim Morris. The British officer had broadly intimated that the farmer was a thief!

On his return to the inn he was so tired that he did not think of supper, and, instead of going into the house, tumbled into his couch in the loft and dropped to sleep almost instantly. The next morning Master Benson did not arrive and the mistress of the inn met Hadley with a very sour face and berated him well for the manner in which he had burst in upon her guests the night before.

"You are spending more than half your time with Washington's ragamuffin army," quoth she; "you'd better stay with them altogether. I cannot have my guests disturbed and troubled by such as you."

Hadley was inclined to take her berating

good-naturedly, for he knew at heart that she was a kindly woman, and that, when Jonas was at home, she would not dare talk so. But she had really engaged a neighbor to perform his tasks, and learning that Jonas was not expected back for a week or more, Hadley saw that it was going to be very unpleasant for him in the neighborhood meanwhile. Even his uncle did not care for his company, and he could not eat the bread of idleness at the Three Oaks Inn. There were three or four men starting to join Washington's forces, and he determined to accompany them, sorry now that he had returned at all.

He did not feel at liberty to take one of the Bensons' horses this time, and so started afoot for the vicinity of Philadelphia. The roads were full of refugee families, and, although he could not learn of any real battle having been fought, the country people had evidently lost all hope of Washington staying the advance of the British. Hadley and his comrades traveled briskly, reaching the vicinity of Warren's Inn early on the morning of the 16th, and joined General Wayne's forces just as the downpour of rain, which spoiled the operations of that day, began.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH "MAD ANTHONY" WAYNE

On this 16th day of September the opposing forces—Howe's army, led by Lord Cornwallis, and the Americans by Anthony Wayne—met in conflict near the Warren Inn. Since Brandywine, when, because of Sullivan's defeat, Washington had been forced to retreat to Chester, the armies had been maneuvering on the Lancaster pike, but nothing more serious than skirmishes had resulted. But this conflict near the old inn was a close and sharp engagement, and it would have been general had not the rain which was falling become a veritable deluge. The arms and ammunition were rendered almost useless, and the Americans had to retreat again.

Bitterly did Hadley Morris grieve as, through the mud and downpour, he trudged in the ranks of his countrymen. Somebody sought him out on the march. It was Captain Prentice, re-

lieved for the time of his command because of his wound; yet he had been near all day to encourage the men, and was able still to wield his sword.

"Eh, boy, I knew you would come back!" he said, smiling. "Your blood's up and you'll not sit at peace in the chimney-corner till this bloody war is settled one way or 'tother."

Hadley told him what had occurred at his uncle's house, and at the inn where he worked. "You did right to come back to fight with us," Prentice said. "And you'll see fighting enough with 'Mad Anthony.' Where he goes there is fighting always—that is his business. And a braver or better general does not command on our side, despite the slanders that are told about him. Ah, Hadley, these adventurers and politicians with His Excellency are what keep us back. They so fear to see a good man win that they will do all they can to ruin him. Why, do you know, they are trying to throw some of the blame for Sullivan's blunder down there at Brandywine creek upon Anthony Wayne, although he fought with all the stubbornness a man ever displayed, and held off Knyphausen and his Hessians all day—until, in fact, he

learned of the defeat in his rear and that the rest of the army was retreating.

"We were too busy ourselves that day, Master Morris, to know much about what went on, excepting directly in front of us," Prentice continued, with a smile. "But now that the matter is history,—for history is being made rapidly these days,—we can get at the truth pretty easily. Colonel Cadwalader, who, by the way, has gone to Philadelphia to look out for his private interests, and several other officers, were discussing the Brandywine engagement yesterday. The Colonel, naturally, is a strong opponent of Sullivan and a warm adherent of General Wayne, for the former has too many political friends and the latter is a plain, out-and-out fighter. Wayne is a Pennsylvania man, you know; has been a farmer over near Easton 'most all his life—though they do say he traveled north once, surveying land. He is somewhere about thirty-three years old now.

"He brought his own regiment into the army —the Fourth Pennsylvania," continued the Captain, getting away from the real matter under discussion, but holding Hadley's attention nevertheless, "and he has been advanced to briga-

dier-general for conspicuous gallantry. They call him 'Mad Anthony,' and claim he is reckless and thoughtless; but it's a pity we haven't more such mad men in the army. You have seen to-day how the troops love him and what they will do for him. This handful of muddy, half-starved creatures would charge the whole of Howe's army if Anthony Wayne were at their head! Did you get a glimpse of him to-day, Morris?"

"Yes, sir. And I think him a fine figure of a man," declared the boy, enthusiastically.

"He is that, indeed. A man of more forceful facial expression I never saw, and his dark eyes are always sparkling—either in fun or with earnestness. Anthony Wayne is an 'all or nothing' man—he is never lukewarm, as are some of these fellows who have obtained their commissions from Congress. What if he does brag? Why, Morris, if we'd done what he has, and were masters of the science of war as he is, we'd brag ourselves!"

"But why do they try to drag him into the trouble over the Brandywine defeat?" queried the boy.

"Why? Ask me why a mangy, homeless

cur always snarls at the heels of a dog that is well bred? 'Tis always so. Jealousy is at the bottom of all these cabals and plots with which the army is troubled. Even His Excellency is not free from the arrows of their hate. And, as I tell you, Sullivan has too many political friends. They wish to attract attention from his mistakes to somebody else, and they fall upon General Wayne and call him reckless. Reckless, forsooth! His fighting that day when he faced those Hessians was marvelous.

"Nobody," pursued Prentice, warmly, "unless it was His Excellency himself, realized how exceedingly well placed my Lord Howe's troops were for defence on the left bank of the Brandywine. Greene selected our position—the position of the main army, I mean, at Chadd's Ford—and it was well. Wayne was there. Sullivan, as the senior major-general, commanded the left wing. Wayne's line was three miles long, and the farthest crossing which he did not cover Sullivan was supposed to watch.

"You and I, Morris, were too busy in our little corner to know these facts at that time. But it has all come out now, and just because a certain Major Spear either acted foolishly or

was a coward, Sullivan's flank was turned and the army routed."

"What had Major Spear to do with it?" asked Hadley, interested despite the mud and rain through which they continued to plod.

"I'll explain. Early on the day of the battle —the eleventh, you know—Howe and Cornwallis marched for the forks of the Brandywine, where there are easy fords. Evidently, they intended to do exactly what they did do—cross the river and march down on our side, doubling Sullivan's wing back upon the main army. For a maneuver in broad daylight it was childish; but it won because of this man Spear.

"Colonel Bland had been ordered to cross at Jones's Ford to find out what the British were about. He sent back word—there can be no doubt of this, although Sullivan's friends have tried to deny it—that Cornwallis was surely marching for the upper crossings. His Excellency, learning of this report, threw Wayne across the river to attack Grant and Knyphausen, while Sullivan and Greene were to engage the flanking column of the Britishers. Why, if things had gone right we'd have cut the two

divisions of the enemy to pieces!" declared the Captain, bitterly.

"But it was not to be. A part of Wayne's troops had already forded the river when this Major Spear, who had been reconnoitering in the direction of the forks, reported no sign of the enemy in that direction. What the matter was with the man I don't know—nobody seems to know; but Sullivan should have known whether he was to be trusted or not. The General, on his own responsibility, halted his column and sent word to His Excellency that the first report of the British movements was wrong—Cornwallis was not in the vicinity of the Brandywine Forks. Naturally this put the Commander-in-Chief out, and fearing a surprise he withdrew Wayne's men from across the river. The Hessians followed, but they got no farther. Mad Anthony held them in check.

"While we were fighting so hard down there by Chadd's Ford, Sullivan was doing nothing at all. About one o'clock, it seems, a man named Cheney rode into Sullivan's division and reported that the British had crossed the river and had reached the Birmingham meeting-house. That was some distance then on Sulli-

van's right. But the general still stuck to his belief in Major Spear, and instead of sending out a scouting party put aside the report as valueless.

"This Squire Cheney is something of a man in his township—lives over Thornbury way, they tell me—and it angered him to be treated so superciliously by Sullivan. So what does he do but spur on to headquarters and inform General Washington himself. The report could scarcely be believed by the Commander-in-Chief and his staff, and you cannot blame them. Everybody knew how much depended on the day's action, and that Sullivan should make such a terrible blunder was past belief.

"Your friend, Colonel Cadwalader, told me about it afterward. 'If you doubt my word put me under arrest until you can ask Anthony Wayne or Persie Frazer if I am a man to be believed!' said Cheney, getting red in the face. The staff—some of the young men, it seemed—had laughed at the queer figure the old fellow cut on his mare. 'I'd have you know that I have this day's work as much at heart as any one of ye!' quoth Cheney, and at that His Excellency ordered a change of face, and

part of the army moved up to the support of Sullivan.

"You know what happened after that. You saw the fugitives and the wounded when you rode to Philadelphia, Hadley. It was a sad day, and all because one man made a mistake, either foolishly or wilfully, and another man did not consider the fate of the first city in the land of sufficient importance to have every report brought to him corroborated. Sullivan must bear the brunt of this thing—as his men bore the brunt of the enemy's charge—because he was in command at that end of the line. But they're trying to make out that Anthony Wayne could have saved the day with his troops had he wished. They'd not talk so bold had they faced those bloody Hessians, as we did."

"It seems awful that there should be friction in an army of patriots," Hadley said, thoughtfully. "They are all patriotic—they all desire the freedom of the Colonies."

"What some of them desire it would be hard to say," declared Prentice, gloomily. "And we are not patriots until we win. We're rebels now—and rebels we shall go down into history unless the great Jehovah Himself shall strike

for us and give us a lasting victory over the British. I tell you, boy, I am discouraged."

And it was a discouraged column of fifteen hundred men who marched that night to Tredyfrin, where Wayne had been ordered by the Commander-in-Chief "to watch the movements of the enemy, and when joined by Smallwood and the Maryland militia to cut off their baggage and hospital train."

On the 19th, after waiting in vain for Smallwood's reinforcements, Wayne again crossed the river, and was, at Paoli, able to advance within half a mile of Howe's encampment. He reported to General Washington that the enemy was then quietly washing and cooking. The British seemed to consider this advance on Philadelphia more in the light of a picnicing party than anything else. To his commander, however, Wayne said that the enemy was too compactly massed to be openly attacked by his small force, and begged that the entire army might come to his aid and strike a heavy blow. But neither Smallwood's brigade nor any other division of the American forces arrived to aid the little party at Paoli on that day nor the one following.

Scouts brought in the tale that Howe was about to take up his line of march, and so, as the night of the 20th drew near, Wayne determined to attack in any case, reinforcements or not. The watchword that night in the American camp was "Here we are and there they go!"and the troops were eager to follow their beloved leader into the very heart of the British encampment. It was believed that the night attack was unsuspected by the British, but it proved later that vigilant Tories had wormed the information from somebody on Wayne's staff and hastened with it to the British camp.

So confident was Wayne that his plans were unsuspected,.that when informed by a friendly citizen between nine and ten in the evening that a boy of the neighborhood who had been in the British camp during the day had overheard a soldier say that "An attack on the American party would be made during the night," Mad Anthony would not credit it. It did not seem probable that if such an attack was being considered by the British leaders, it would be common camp talk.

However, believing that surplus precaution would do no harm, he multiplied his pickets and

patrols, and ordered the troops to repose on their arms, and, as it was then raining, made the men put their ammunition under their coats. He was thus prepared to meet an attack or withdraw, as circumstances might direct.

Ere this Captain Prentice had been sent to headquarters, almost by force, indeed, because his wound had become inflamed, and Hadley being simply a volunteer, was obliged to take pot-luck where he found it, and was even without a blanket, or pouch in which to carry his rations. He would have been more comfortable on picket duty that night, only volunteers were not trusted in such serious matters, and perhaps if he had been, the youth would not have gotten out of the terrible engagement alive.

Somewhere about eleven o'clock rumor had it that the British were on the move. Wayne believed that the enemy would attack his right flank, and immediately ordered Colonel Humpton, his second in command, to wheel his line and move off by the road leading to the White Horse Inn. Meanwhile General Gray, in command of three British regiments and some dragoons with Tory guides, approached Paoli. The British were ordered to withhold their fire,

and to depend altogether on the bayonet. At midnight, two hours before the time fixed for his own advance on Howe's force, Wayne learned that his pickets had been surprised.

Colonel Humpton had not obeyed, nor did he do so until the third order reached him. The artillery moved without loss or injury, but the remainder of the army was in confusion, and when charged by the British, the affair became almost a rout. An English officer who was present at the attack, afterward wrote:

"It was a dreadful scene of havoc. The Americans were easily distinguished by the light of the camp fires as they fell into line, thus offering Gray's men an advantage. The charge was furious, and all Wayne's efforts to rally his men were useless. They were driven through the woods two miles, and nearly a hundred and seventy men were killed. It was that chance of war where one side did what the other hoped to do."

With those about him, inspired as they were with fear of the bayonet and confused by the darkness, Hadley Morris ran blindly through the woods to escape the death which followed him. The awful sabre-like bayonets of the

British muskets he did escape; but a half spent ball imbedded itself in the flesh of his leg above the knee and brought him at last to earth. The others streamed by and left him. He feared he would be captured and, perhaps, sent to the prison hulks in New York bay; but both pursued and pursuer passed him by and he was saved in the darkness.

He could not travel with the ball in his leg, and so he lay down again under some bushes, and despite the wound and his fright, dropped off into slumber and slept just as soundly as he would had war and bloodshed been farthest from his thoughts!

CHAPTER XIV

THE OCCUPATION OF PHILADELPHIA

The sun shining warmly upon his face through the rapidly drying bushes, which during the night had partly sheltered him, was Hadley's first conscious feeling. Then he felt the dull pain in his leg where the spent ball had become imbedded, and he rolled over with a groan. The wood lay as peaceful and quiet under the rising sun as though such a thing as war did not exist. Here and there a branch had been splintered by a musket ball, or a bush had been trampled by the retreating Americans. But the rain had washed away all the brown spots from the grass and twigs, and the birds twittered gayly in the tree tops, forgetting the disturbing conflict of the night.

The boy found when he tried to rise that his whole leg was numb and he could only drag it as he hobbled through the wood. To cover the few rods which lay between the place where he had slept and the road, occupied some minutes.

The wound had bled freely and now the blood was caked over it, and every movement of the limb caused much pain.

Where had his companions gone? When the company rolls were called that morning there would be no inquiry for him, for he was not a regularly recruited man. He had been but a hanger-on of the brigade which was so disastrously attacked during the night, and they would all forget him. Captain Prentice was far away, and Hadley had known nobody else well among Wayne's troops. The fact of his loneliness, together with his wound and his hunger, fairly brought the tears to his eyes, great boy that he was! But many a soldier who has fought all day with his face to the enemy has wept childish tears when left at night, wounded and alone, on the battlefield.

However, one could not really despair on such a bright morning as this, and Hadley soon plucked up courage. He got out his pocket-knife, found a sapling with a crotched top, cut it off the proper length, and used it for a crutch. With this, and dragging his useless musket behind him, he hobbled up the road in a direction which he knew must bring him to the American

lines, and eventually to Philadelphia. But such traveling was slow and toilsome work, and he was trembling all the time for fear he would fall in with the British.

He had not been many minutes on the way, however, when a man stepped out of the bush beside the road, and barred his way. Hadley was frightened at first; then he recognized the man and shouted with delight.

"Lafe Holdness! How ever did you come here?

"Jefers-pelters!" exclaimed the Yankee scout. "I reckon I might better ask yeou that question, Had. An' wounded, too! Was yeou with that brigade last night that got bamboozled?"

"The British attacked us unexpectedly. Oh, Lafe! they charged right through our lines and bayonetted the men awfully!"

"I reckon. It's war, boy—you ain't playin' mumblepeg." Meanwhile the man had assisted Hadley to a seat on the bank, and with his own knife calmly ripped up the leg of Hadley's trousers. "Why, boy, you've got a ball in there—as sure as ye live!"

"It hurts pretty bad, Lafe," Hadley admitted,

wincing when the scout touched the leg, which was now inflamed about the wound.

There was a rill near by, and to this the scout hurried and brought back water in his cap. With the boy's handkerchief he washed the caked blood away and then, by skillful pressure of his fingers, found the exact location of the imbedded bullet. "Oh, this ain't so bad," he said cheerfully. "We'll fix it all right in no time. But ye mustn't do much walking for some days to come. Yeou can ride, though, and I've got a hoss nearby. First of all, I must git the ball out and wash the hole. Ye see, Had, the ball lies right under the skin on the back of the leg—so. D'ye see?"

"I can feel it all right," groaned Hadley.

"Well, it's a pity it didn't go 'way through. Howsomever, if you'll keep a stiff upper lip for a minute, I'll git the critter out. 'Twon't hurt much ter speak of. Swabbin' out th' hole, though, 'll likely make ye jump."

He opened the knife again and, before Hadley could object, had made a quick incision over the ball, and the lead pellet dropped out into his hand. The boy did not have a chance to cry out, it was done so quickly. "So much for

so much," said Lafe, in a business-like tone. "Nothin' like sarvin' yer 'prenticeship ter all sorts of trades. I ain't no slouch of a surgeon, I calkerlate! Now lemme git an alder twig."

He obtained the twig in question, brought more water, and then proceeded, after having removed the pith from the heart of the twig, to blow the cool water into the wound. Hadley cried out at this and begged him to desist, but Lafe said: "Come, Had, yeou can stand a little pain now for the sake of being all right by and by, can't yeou? It's better to be sure than sorry. P'r'aps there warn't no cloth nor nothin' got inter that wound, but ye can't tell. One thing, there warn't no artery cut or ye'd bled ter death lyin' under them bushes all night. I 'spect many a poor chap did die in yander after the retreat. Anthony Wayne 'll have ter answer fer that. They say he's goin' ter be court-martialed." *

* Seeking to exonerate himself, Colonel Humpton preferred charges against Wayne to the effect that "Though Gen'l Wayne had timely notice of the enemy's intention to attack the troops, he neglected making a disposition until it was too late either to annoy the enemy or to make a retreat without the utmost danger and confusion." Wayne was tried by court-martial, but was found guiltless, the decision being that "he did everything that could be expected from an able, brave, and vigilant officer."

Having cleaned the wound, Holdness bound it up tightly with strips torn from the boy's cotton shirt, and then brought up the horse which he had hidden hard by. He helped the boy into the saddle and walked beside him until they were through the American picket lines. The wounded had been sent on to Philadelphia, for there were few conveniences for field hospitals. "You take that hoss and ride inter Philadelphy, Had," said Holdness. "Leave it at the Queen and take yourself to this house"—he gave the wounded lad a brief note scrawled on a bit of dirty paper—"and the folks there'll look out for ye till the laig's well. I'll git another hoss somewhere else that'll do jest as well. You can't go clean back to Jarsey with your leg in that shape."

It was a hard journey for the wounded youth, and before he crossed the Schuylkill and followed Chestnut Street (much different was his entrance to the city now from that of the evening of Brandywine) down into the heart of the town he was well nigh-spent. He fairly fell off the horse in front of the Indian Queen Tavern, and the hostler had to help him to the address which Holdness had given him. Here the

good man and his wife—Quaker folk were they, who greatly abhorred the bloodshed of the war, yet were stanch supporters of the American cause—took the boy in and cared for him as though he was their own son. For a night and a day he kept to his bed; but he could not stand it any longer than that. The surgeon who was called to attend him declared the wound had been treated very well, indeed, by the scout, and that it was healing nicely; so what does Master Hadley do but hobble downstairs to the breakfast table on the second morning, determined no longer to cause the good Quakeress, Mistress Pye, the extra trouble of sending his breakfast up to him.

He was anxious to hear the news, too. Affairs were moving swiftly these days in Philadelphia. The uncertainty of what the next day might bring forth forced shops to close and almost all business to cease. The Whigs were leaving by hundreds; even the men who held authoritative places in the council of the town had departed, fearful of what might happen when the redcoats marched in. And that Washington could keep them out for long, after the several reverses the

American troops had sustained, was not to be believed.

A sense of portending calamity hung over the city like an invisible cloud. A third of the houses were shut and empty. Many of the others were occupied solely by servants or slaves, the families having flown to places of safety. Hadley did not get outside the door of the Pye house that day, for he was watched too closely. But early on the morning of the 26th the whole street was aroused by the swift dash of a horseman over the cobbles, and a cry followed the flying messenger:

"The British are coming!"

The people ran out of their houses, never waiting for their breakfasts. Was the news true? Had the redcoats eluded the thin line of Americans that so long had stayed their advance upon the town? Soon the truth was confirmed. Congress had adjourned to Lancaster. Howe had made a feint of marching on Reading, and when the Americans were thrown forward to protect that town the British had turned aside and were now within sight. They had surprised and overpowered a small detachment left to guard the approach to Philadel-

phia and—the city was lost! His Excellency was then at Skippack creek with the bulk of his army, and the city could hope for no help from him.

Hadley, hobbling on a crutch, but too anxious and excited to remain longer indoors, soon reached Second Street. From Callowhill to Chestnut it was filled with old men and children. Scarcely a youth of his own age was to be seen, for the young men had gone into the army. It was a quiet but a terribly anxious crowd, and questions which went unanswered were whispered from man to man. Will the redcoats really march in to-day? Will the helpless folk left in the city be treated as a conquered people? Why has Congress, spurred on by hot-heads, sanctioned this war at all? Many who had been enthusiastic in the cause were lukewarm now. The occupation of the town might mean the loss of their homes and the scattering of those whom they loved.

Here and there a Tory strutted, unable to hide his delight at the turn affairs had taken. Several times little disturbances, occasioned by the overbearing manners of this gentry, arose, but

as a whole the crowds were solemn and gloomy. At eleven o'clock a squadron of dragoons appeared and galloped along the street, scattering the crowd to right and left; but it closed in again as soon as they were through, for far down the thoroughfare sounded the first strains of martial music. Then something glittered in the sunshine, and the people murmured and crowded into the roadway the better to see the head of the approaching army of their conquerors.

A wave of red, steadily advancing—and tipped with a line of flashing steel bayonets was finally descried. In perfect unison the famous grenadiers came into view, their pointed red caps, fronted with silver, their white leather leggings and short scarlet coats, trimmed with blue, making an impressive display. Hadley, who had seen the nondescript farmer soldiery of the American army, sighed at this parade. How could General Washington expect to beat such men as these? And then the boy remembered how he had seen the same farmers standing off the trained British hosts at Brandywine, and later at the Warren Tavern, and he took heart. Training and dress and food and

good looks were not everything. Every man on the American side was fighting for his hearth, for his wife, for his children, and for everything he loved best on earth!

Behind the grenadiers rode a group of officers, the first a stout man, with gray hair and a pleasant countenance, despite the squint in his eye. A whisper went through the silent crowd and reached Hadley's ear: "'Tis Lord Cornwallis himself!" Then there was a louder murmur—in some cases threatening in tone. Behind the officers rode a party of Tories hated by every patriot in Philadelphia—the two Allens, Tench Coxe, Enoch Story, Joe Galloway. Never would they have dared return but under the protection of British muskets.

Then followed the Fourth, Fortieth, and Fifty-fifth regiments, all in scarlet. Then Hadley saw a uniform he knew well—would never forget, indeed. He saw it when Wayne held the tide of Knyphausen's ranks back at Chadd's Ford. Breeches of yellow leather, leggings of black, dark blue coats, and tall pointed hats of brass completed the uniform of the hireling soldiery which, against their own desires and the desires of their countrymen, had been

sent across the ocean by their prince to fight for the English king. A faint hiss arose from the crowd of spectators as the Hessians, with their fierce mustaches and scowling looks, marched by.

Then there were more grenadiers, and cavalry, artillery, wagons containing provisions, and the officers' tents. The windows rattled to the rumbling wheels, and the women cowered behind the drawn blinds, peering out upon the ranks that, at the command of a ruler across the sea, who cared nothing for these Colonies but what could be made out of them, had come to shoot down and to enslave their own flesh and blood.

Hadley could not get around very briskly, but he learned where some of the various regiments were quartered. The artillery was in the State House yard. Those wounded Continentals, who had lain in the long banqueting hall on the second floor of the State House, and who could not get away or be moved by their friends, would now learn what a British prison pen was like. Hadley shuddered to think how he had so nearly escaped a like fate, and was fearful still that something might happen to reveal to

the enemy that he, too, had taken up arms against the king. The Forty-second Highlanders were drawn up in Chestnut Street below Third; the Fifteenth Regiment was on High Street. When ranks were broken in the afternoon the streets all over town were full of red- or blue-coated figures.

Hadley hobbled back to the shelter of the Pye homestead and learned from the good Quaker where some of the officers had been quartered. Cornwallis was just around the corner, on Second Street, at Neighbor Reeves' house; Knyphausen was at Henry Lisle's, while the younger officers, including Lord Rawden, were scattered among the better houses of the town. A young Captain André (later Major André) was quartered in Dr. Franklin's old house. The British had really come into the hotbed of the "rebels," and had made themselves much at home.

CHAPTER XV

HADLEY IS CAST OFF BY UNCLE EPHRAIM

THE army of occupation brought in its train plenty of Tories and hangers-on besides the men named, though none who had been quite so prominent in affairs or were so greatly detested. It now behooved the good folk of pronounced Whig tendencies to walk circumspectly, for enemies lay in wait at every corner to hale them before the British commander and accuse them of traitorous conduct. Hadley Morris, therefore, although he did not expect to be recognized by anybody in the town, resolved to get away as soon as his wound would allow.

He could not resist, however, going out at sunset to observe the evening parade of the conquerors. There was something very fascinating for him in the long lines of brilliant uniforms and the glittering accoutrements. The British looked as though they had been simply march-

ing through the country on a continual dress parade. How much different was the condition of even the uniformed Continentals!

To the strains of martial music the sun sank to rest, and as the streets grew dark the boisterous mirth of the soldiery disturbed those of the inhabitants who, fearful still of some untoward act upon the part of the invaders, had retired behind the barred doors of their homes. In High Street and on the commons campfires were burning, and Hadley wandered among them, watching the soldiers cooking their evening meal. Most of the houses he passed were shut; but here and there was one wide open and brilliantly lighted. These were the domiciles where the officers were quartered, or else, being the abode of "faithful" Tories, the proprietors were celebrating the coming of the king's troops. Laughter and music came from these, and the Old Coffee House and the Indian Queen were riotous with parties of congratulation upon the occupation by the redcoats.

As Hadley hobbled back to Master Pye's, past the inn, he suddenly observed a familiar face in the crowd. A number of country bumpkins were mixing with the soldiery before the en-

trance to the Indian Queen, and Hadley was positive he saw Lon Alwood. Whether the Tory youth had observed him or not, Hadley did not know; but the fact of Lon's presence in the city caused him no little anxiety, and he hurried on to the Quaker's abode. He wondered what had brought Lon up to Philadelphia—and just at this time of all others?

"The best thing I can do is to get out of town as quick as circumstances will permit," thought Hadley, and upon reaching Friend Pye's he told the old Quaker how he had seen somebody who knew him in the city—a person who would leave no stone unturned to injure him if possible.

"We must send thee away, then, Hadley Morris," declared the Quaker. "Where wilt thou go with thy wounded leg?"

"I'll go home. There isn't anything for a wounded man to do about here, I reckon. But the leg won't hobble me for long."

"Nay, I hope not. I will see what can be done for thee in the morning."

Friend Jothan Pye was considered, even by his Tory neighbors, to be too close a man and too sharp a trader to have any real interest

in the patriot cause. He had even borne patiently from the Whigs much calumny, that he might, by so doing, be the better able to help the Colonies. Now that the British occupied the town, he might work secretly for the betterment of the Americans and none be the wiser. He had already gone to the British officers and obtained a contract for the cartage of grain into the city for the army, and in two days it was arranged that Hadley should go out of town in one of Friend Pye's empty wagons, and he did so safely, hidden under a great heap of empty grain sacks. In this way he traveled beyond Germantown and outside the British lines altogether.

Then he found another teamster going across the river, and with him he journeyed until he was at the Mills, only six miles from Three Oaks Inn. Those last six miles he managed to hobble with only the assistance of his crutch, arriving at the hostlery just at evening. Jonas Benson had returned from Trenton and the boy was warmly welcomed by him. Indeed, that night in the public room, Hadley was the most important person present. The neighbors flocked in to hear him tell of the Paoli attack and of

the occupation of Philadelphia, and he felt like a veteran.

But he could not help seeing that Mistress Benson was much put out with him. As time passed the innkeeper's wife grew more and more bitter against the Colonists. She had been born in England, and the presence of Colonel Knowles and his daughter at the inn seemed to have fired her smoldering belief in the "divine right"; and had particularly stirred her ire against the Americans.

"I'm sleepin' in the garret myself, Had," groaned Jonas, in an aside to the boy. "I can't stand her tongue when she gets abed o' nights. I'm hopin' this war'll end before long, for it's a severin' man and wife—an' spilin' business, into the bargain! She's complainin' about me keepin' your place for ye, Had, so I've got Anson Driggs for stable boy. And, of course, she won't let me pay Miser Morris your wage no more. I didn't know but she'd come down from her high hosses when them Knowleses went away, but she's worse'n ever!"

"Have the Colonel and Mistress Lillian gone?"

"They have, indeed—bad luck to them!—

though I've no fault to find with the girl; she was prettily spoken enough. But the Colonel has been recalled to his command, I understand. His business with your uncle came to naught, I reckon. D'ye know what it was, Had?"

Hadley shook his head gloomily. "No. Uncle would tell me nothing. But the Colonel seemed very bitter against him."

"And what d'ye think of doing?"

"I'm not fit for anything until this wound heals completely. I can't walk much for some time yet. But I'll go over and see Uncle in the morning."

"Ride Molly over. There's no need o' your walking about here. And come back here to sleep. Likely Miser Morris will be none too glad to see ye. Your bed's in the loft same's us'al. Anson goes home at night. The place is dead, anyway. If this war doesn't end soon I might as well burn the old house down—there's no money to be gotten by keeping it open."

On the morrow Hadley climbed upon Black Molly and rode over to the Morris homestead. Most of the farmers in the neighborhood had

harvested their grain by this time. The corn was shocked and the pumpkins gleamed in golden contrast to the brown earth and stubble. In some fields he saw women and children at work, the men being away with the army. The sight was an encouraging one. Despite the misfortunes and reverses of General Washington's army, this showed that the common people were still faithful to the cause of liberty.

News, too, of an encouraging nature had come from the north. The battle of Bennington and the first battle of Stillwater had been fought. The army of Burgoyne, which was supposed to be unconquerable, had been halted, and, even with the aid of Indians and Tories, the British commander could not get past General Gates. News traveled slowly in those days, but a pretty correct account had dribbled through the country sections; and there was still some hope of Washington's striking a decisive blow himself before winter set in.

The signs of plenty in the fields as he rode on encouraged Hadley Morris, who had seen, of late, so many things to discourage his hope in the ultimate success of the American arms. When he reached his uncle's grain fields he

found that they, too, had been reaped, and so clean that there was not a beggar's gleaning left among the stubble. He rode on to the house, thinking how much good the store of grain Ephraim Morris had gathered might do the patriot troops, were Uncle Ephraim only of his way of thinking.

As he approached the house the watchdog began barking violently, and not until he had laboriously dismounted before the stable door did the brute recognize him. Then it ran up to the boy, whining and licking his hand; but as Uncle Ephraim appeared the dog backed off and began to bark again, as though it were not, after all, quite sure whether to greet the boy as a friend or an enemy. Evidently the old farmer had been in like quandary, for he bore a long squirrel rifle in the hollow of his arm and his brows met in a black scowl when his gaze rested on his nephew's face.

"Well, what want ye here?" he demanded.

"Why, Uncle, I have come to see you—"

"I'm no uncle of yours—ye runaway rebel!" exclaimed the old man, harshly. "What's this I hear from Jonas Benson? He says ye are not at his inn and that he'll no longer pay me

the wages he promised. If that doesn't make you out a runaway 'prentice then what does it mean?"

"Why, you know Mistress Benson is very violent for the king just now—"

"Ha!" exclaimed the farmer. "I didn't know she had the sense to be. It's too bad she doesn't get a little of it into Jonas."

"Well, she doesn't want me around. And Jonas can't pay two of us."

"She wouldn't have turned ye off if ye'd stayed where ye belonged, Hadley Morris. Oh, I know ye—and I know what ye've been doing of late," cried the farmer. "Ha! Lame, air ye? What's that from?"

"I got a ball in my leg—"

"I warrant. Crippling yourself, too. Been fighting with the 'ragamuffin reg'lars,' hey? An' sarve ye right—sarve ye right, I say." The old man scowled still more fiercely. "And now that you've got licked ye come back home like a cur with its tail 'twixt its legs, arskin ter be taken in—hey? I know your breed."

"If you don't want me here I can go away again," Hadley said, quietly.

"What would I want ye for? You're a

lazy good-for-nothing — that's what ye air! There's naught for ye to do about the farm this time o' year—an' crippled, too. Ye'd never come back to me if that ball hadn't hit ye. Ye'd stayed on with that Mr. Washington ye're so fond of talking about. Ha! I'm done with ye! Ye've been naught but an expense and a trouble since your mother brought ye here—and she was an expense, too. I'm a poor man; I can't have folks hangin' ter the tail o' my coat. Your mother—"

"Suppose we let that drop, sir," interrupted Hadley, firmly, and his eyes flashed. "Everybody in this neighborhood knows what my mother was. They know that she worked herself into her grave in this house. And if she hadn't begged me to stay here as long as I could be of any use to you I'd never stood your ill treatment as long as I did. And now," cried the youth, growing angrier as he thought of the slurring tone his uncle had used in speaking of the dead woman, "it lies with you whether you break with your last relative on earth or not. I will stand abuse myself, and hard work; but you sha'n't speak one word against mother!"

"Hoity-toity!" exclaimed the old man. "The young cock is crowing, heh! Who are you that tells me what I should do or shouldn't do?" Hadley was silent. He was sorry now that he had spoken so warmly. "Seems to me, Master Hadley, for a beggar ye talk pretty uppishly —that's it, uppishly! And you are a beggar— ye've got nothing and ye never will have anything. I'll find some other disposal to make of my farm here—"

"I'm not looking for dead men's shoes!" flashed out the youth again. "You've had my time, and you've a right to it for three years longer. If you want to hire me out as soon as my wound is well you can do so. I haven't refused to work for you."

"Yah!" snarled the old man. "Who wants to hire a boy at this time of the year? The country's ruined as it is—jest ruined. There's no business. I tell you that you're an expense, and I'd ruther have your room than your company!"

Hadley turned swiftly. He had clung to Black Molly's bridle. Now he climbed upon the horse block, and, in spite of his wound, fairly flung himself into the saddle. "You've

told me to go, Uncle Ephraim!" he exclaimed, with flaming cheeks. "You don't have to tell me twice," and, pounding his heels into the mare's sides, he set off at a gallop along the path and in a moment was out of sight of the angry farmer.

There was bitterness in the boy's heart and angry tears in his eyes as Black Molly fled across the pastures and out upon the highway. Hadley Morris did not really love his uncle. There was nothing lovable about Miser Morris. The boy had been misjudged and his mother spoken ill of—and that fact he could not forget. He had tried for a year and a half to keep from a final disagreement with Uncle Ephraim, but to no avail. The old man did not consider Hadley old enough to judge for himself, or to have any opinions of his own. The times were such that children grew to youth and young men to manhood very rapidly. When the fathers went to the war the sons became the providers and defenders of the household; if the fathers did not go, the sons were in the ranks themselves. Questions were not asked regarding age by the recruiting officers, providing a youth looked hearty and was able to carry

a musket. And Hadley felt himself a man grown in experience, if not in years, after the exciting incidents of the past few weeks.

"I am able to judge for myself in some things," he told himself, pulling Molly down to a walk so as to ease his leg. "If uncle would accept the fact that I have a right to my own opinion, as he has a right to his, we never would have quarreled. I'd never gone over to the Three Oaks to work. And then I'd never seen any active service, I s'pose. He's got only himself to thank for it, if he did not want me to join the army.

"But now I reckon there isn't anything left for me to do but that. Jonas can't have me and keep peace in the family; and I wouldn't stay after the way Mistress Benson talked last night —no indeed! I'll go to some of the neighbors. They'll give me a bite to eat and a place to sleep till my leg gets well enough for me to walk. Then I'll go back to the army."

He so decided; but when Jonas heard his plan he vetoed it at once. "What, Had!" cried the old innkeeper, "d'ye think I'll let a nagging woman drive you away from here to the neighbors? Nay, nay! I'm master here yet, and

she is not really so bad, Had. She doesn't begrudge ye the bite and sup. Stay till your leg is well."

"But I shall not feel comfortable as long as I stay, Jonas," declared the boy.

"And how long will that be? Your leg is mending famously. If you could but ride ye'd be fit to go into battle again now! Ah, lad, I'm proud of you—and glad that it was part through me ye went to the wars. I can't go myself; but I can give of what I have, and if the Mistress does not like it she can scold—'twill make her feel better, I suppose." Then he looked at Hadley curiously. "You're anxious to get back to General Washington again, eh, lad?"

"I wish I had hunted up Captain Prentice, or Colonel Cadwalader, when I got out of Philadelphia, instead of coming over here," admitted the youth.

"Then start back now," Jonas said. "Ride the mare—she knows ye and ye'll get back in time to be of some use, mayhap, for I heard this morning that there's a chance of another battle in a day or two."

"Take Molly, sir?" cried the astonished boy.

"Yes. Most of my horses have already gone to the cause. I've got a packet of scrip as they call it, for 'em, but it's little worth the stuff is now, and perhaps it will never be redeemed. But I'm a poor sort of fellow if I mind that. You take the mare. I know if you both live you'll come back here. And if the mare is killed—"

The innkeeper stopped, for his voice had broken. He was looking hard at the boy's flushed face, and now he reached up and gripped Hadley's hand with sudden warmth. The youth knew that it was not the thought of the possible loss of Black Molly that had choked the worthy innkeeper, but the fear that perhaps her rider would never come back again.

"I'll take her, Jonas—and thank you. I'll be happier—better content, at least—away from here. Uncle doesn't want me, nor does he need me; and certainly Mistress Benson doesn't wish me about the inn. So I'll take Molly, and if all comes well you shall have her back safe and sound."

"That's all right—that's all right, Had!" exclaimed the other, quickly. "Look out when

them army smiths shoe her. She's got just the suspicion of a corn on that nigh fore foot, ye know. And take care of yourself, Had!"

He wrung Hadley's hand again, and the boy pulled the little mare around. There was nothing more to be said; there was nothing to keep him back. So Hadley Morris rode away to join Washington's forces, which then lay idle near the beleaguered city.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM GERMANTOWN TO VALLEY FORGE

HADLEY slept that night at a friendly farmer's, some miles to the north of Germantown. A large force of British were quartered about where Washington's army lay the first day the boy had crossed the river and made his way to the Commander-in-Chief's headquarters with the dispatches so nearly lost by the wounded courier. As far as he could learn the Americans still rested at Skippack Creek, to which locality they had retired after the enemy entered Philadelphia.

He made a long detour the next morning to avoid the Germantown outposts, but fell in with a foraging party of Continentals before noon, and was near to losing his horse. But he was not so afraid of these marauders now as he had been the night he was halted on the Germantown road and his dispatches seized. So after an

argument with these fellows and the mention of Colonel Cadwalader's name, he got away with directions regarding the shortest path to headquarters. He was halted a good many times before he found the Pennsylvania troops, but the pickets saw that he was a recruit and let him through without trouble.

He found John Cadwalader with General Wayne, and was able to obtain speech with him without dismounting from his horse, as the officers were about starting on a tour of inspection through the camp. "And you want to see more fighting, do you, my lad—and your wound not healed yet?" said the Colonel. "What good d'ye think a wounded man will be to us?"

"But I'm all right on horseback, and I've brought my horse," Hadley declared.

"I wish we had more such fellows—and as eager to fight, Colonel," said General Wayne. "He's but a boy, too."

"And how about the promise to your mother, Master Morris?" queried the other officer.

"My uncle has cast me off for carrying dispatches, and for being in the Paoli fight, where I got wounded," the boy said sadly. "I can

do nothing for him now. So I have come to do what I can."

"Well, well. I will speak to His Excellency about you. There is a certain long-legged Yankee hereabout who, if I mistake not, has been inquiring for you through the camp."

"Lafe Holdness!" exclaimed Hadley.

"The same. He said he knew you had gotten away from Philadelphia, but where you had gone was another matter, and one of which he was not cognizant. Now, Master Morris, you will find your friend, Captain Prentice, somewhere to the west of here. Keep near him and then you will be near me. When the propitious moment comes to present you to the Commander-in-Chief, I shall want you in a hurry."

The officers rode on and Hadley sought out Captain Prentice. "My faith, Hadley!" was the captain's exclamation, "but we're a pretty pair of winged birds." His own arm was still in a sling, but he had taken active command of his company again.

"You can scarcely call me winged," said Hadley, "for the ball went through my leg." He climbed down from the mare and allowed a

soldier to take her away. He could scarcely walk, having been so many hours in the saddle, but Captain Prentice made him welcome and saw to it that he had a bed for a few hours, where he slept away much of his weariness.

At this time Washington's forces lay about twenty miles from Philadelphia and fourteen from Germantown. For some days the Continentals had been resting after the arduous campaign which had followed the landing of the British troops. The officers were planning some important move, but the army was kept in ignorance of its nature until the night of the third of October. Then the columns were put into motion quickly and took the road to Germantown. It was to be a night march to surprise the enemy, and never did Hadley Morris forget it. He and his friend, Captain Prentice, were both mounted—the latter on a sorry nag which his orderly had picked up somewhere—and there might have been some ill feeling expressed among the other officers of the infantry over Prentice's riding had he not been wounded. But those fourteen miles were hard enough for both the captain and Hadley, despite the fact

that they were not obliged to tramp through the heavy roads.

Before the head of the column was half way to Germantown the night fog began to gather, and before daylight it was so thick that it was almost impossible to clearly distinguish figures moving a rod ahead. Just at daybreak, however, despite the fog which had enveloped the whole territory, sharp firing broke out ahead. The troops were rushed forward, and the British, who at first had supposed the firing to be but a skirmish between outposts, were quickly being driven back by a solid phalanx of Americans.

After the first surprise the enemy formed and stood their ground, but the attack of the Americans was so desperate that they would surely have been overwhelmed in a short time had it not been for two things. Howe, hearing early of the battle, rushed forward reinforcements and came in person to encourage his soldiery. And the other thing which stayed the Americans, besides the smother of fog, was the imposing mansion belonging to Master Chew, which, occupied by the British, was a veritable fort, and withstood every effort of the attacking force.

It was a stone building, and with its doors and windows barricaded and a strong force of the enemy using the upper casements to fire from, it soon became the pivotal point on the battlefield. The British kept up a destructive fire upon the American lines from the house, and, in spite of the fog, the casualties were considerable. Attempts again and again were made to capture it. The American lines could not go past, and it guarded the way to the British front.

And, with the long delay occasioned by the obstinate defense of the Chew house, the elements themselves seemed to be arrayed against the Americans. The fog became so dense that the men could not see each other a few paces apart, and only the spurts of red flame ahead betrayed the whereabouts of the enemy. The Continental troops grew bewildered; aides were unable to find the officers to whom they were sent with messages from the commanders. There were shoutings and reiterated commands in the fog, but the files did not know where their officers stood and became bewildered and unmanageable.

General Washington's plans were disar-

ranged. The Americans had fought bravely, and, without doubt, were on the eve of a decisive victory. But an alarm was created—the tramp of a regiment of American troops brought up from the rear was thought to be the approach of a flanking force—and the men who had fought so tenaciously during the day retreated in disorderly confusion.

Added to the general depression caused by this defeat was the fact that half the Maryland militia was reported to have deserted before the battle. It was the beginning of that awful winter when naught but the extraordinary virtues of George Washington himself kept the semblance of an army together. The American forces were rapidly becoming a disorganized mob, and the fault lay with Congress, which numbered in its group few of the really great and unselfish men who had once met in Philadelphia to approve of and sign the second greatest document in our history.

The period had now arrived when men of the second rank had come to the front in charge of the uncertain affairs of the struggling colonies. Dr. Franklin was in Paris, and John Adams joined him during the winter for the purpose

of watching Silas Deane, who was a bitter foe of Washington, and had sent over the infamous Conway to hamper and embitter the great man's very existence. Jay, Rutledge, Livingston, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson were employed at home, and Hancock had resigned from the governing House. Samuel Adams was at home in New England for most of that winter, and men much the inferior of these had taken their places—men who lacked foresight and that loftiness of purpose and love of country which had, earlier in the war, kept private jealousies and quarrels in check.

Without an organized quartermaster's department the soldiers could not be properly clothed or fed, and the warnings of Washington were utterly disregarded by Congress. The troops began to need clothing soon after Brandywine, and by November they were still in unsheltered camps without sufficient clothing, blankets, or tents. Hadley Morris, suffering with the rank and file, saw them lying out all night at Whitemarsh, half clad and without protection from either the frozen ground or the desperate chill of the night air. Forts Mercer and Mifflin had fallen, and there was little cheer

brought to these poor fellows by the news that Burgoyne had actually surrendered to General Gates and that the British army of invasion which had started so confidently from Canada was utterly crushed.

December came and snow followed frost. The British were snug and warm in the "rebel capital." Well fed, well clothed, spending the time in idleness and amusement, the invaders were secure of any attack from the starving, half-clothed men who, with Washington at their head, crawled slowly over the Chester hills toward the little hollow on the bank of the Schuylkill. There was gold in plenty at the command of General Howe, and for this gold the farmers about Philadelphia were glad to sell their grain. And who can blame them for preferring the good English gold to the badly printed, worthless currency issued by the American Congress?

The ten redoubts from Fairmount to Cohocksink were stout and well manned. There was little danger of the Continentals attacking them, for the hills were already whitening with the coverlet of winter. The river was open, supplies and reinforcements were on the way

from across the ocean, and the British had nothing to fear. So they gave themselves up to ease and merriment. And, fortunate for the cause then trembling in the balance, that they did so, for had they then conducted the campaign against Washington's starving troops with vigor the "rebellion" would never have risen in history to the dignity of a "revolution"!

CHAPTER XVII

A PERILOUS MISSION

To-day, after the passing of a century and a quarter, the Chester hills are much as they were on that chill winter's day when the straggling lines of ragged, almost barefooted men marched along the old Gulph road. It is a farming country still, and although the forest has been cut away, in places the woodland is now as thickly grown as then. Here and there along the route the admiring descendants of those faithful patriots have erected monuments to their name; yonder can still faintly be defined the outlines of the Star redoubt; there stands the house which was the headquarters of General Varnum, who commanded the Rhode Island troops; to the left of the road, as one travels toward Valley Forge, is the line of breastworks running through the timber which has been felled and grown up thrice

since the axes of the Continentals rang from hill to hill.

One night they rested on the toilsome march near the old Gulph mills, where the road passed through the deep cut between wooded heights; then on again, the various brigades separating and following different roads to the places assigned them. But the roads were, many of them, ill defined, the timber was thick, the fields rugged. Little wonder that Baron de Kalb described the site chosen for the winter quarters of the American army as a wilderness!

Nevertheless the situation selected for the encampment was a good one. In some of the towns, perhaps,—Trenton, Lancaster, Reading, or Wilmington,—there would have been shelter for the troops; but there were many objections to each place named. Had clothing and supplies been abundant, the little army might have harassed the British all winter long and even shut them up completely in Philadelphia when the spring opened. If the officers quarreled with the commander for his obstinacy in choosing this position, the men set to in some cheerfulness to build shelters. They were not afraid of hard work, and they had suffered enough already

from the cold and storms to appreciate the log cabins which went up as if by magic on hillside and in hollow.

On the bank of Valley Creek, near its junction with the Schuylkill, stood a stone building (as it stands to-day) of two small, low-ceiled rooms on each of its two floors. Behind it was a "lean-to" kitchen in the floor of which was a trap which was the entrance to a secret passage which, when the house had been erected, led to the river, being a means of escape should the stone house be attacked by Indians. When Washington selected this house for his headquarters at Valley Forge the secret passage had long since been walled up and the entrance chamber was simply a prosaic potato cellar. The house itself was meagrely furnished—not at all the sort of a headquarters that Lord Howe enjoyed in Philadelphia.

Some distance up the creek, beyond the forge which lent its name to the valley, were the headquarters of big Major-General Henry Knox, of the artillery, and near him was the young French Marquis La Fayette, but then recovering from the wound received at the battle of the Brandywine—also a Major General and

trusted and loved by the Commander-in-Chief to a degree only equaled by the latter's feeling for Colonel Pickering. General Woodford, of Virginia, who commanded the right of the line, was quartered at a house in the neighborhood of Knox and Lafayette.

Up on the Gulph road the southern troops, lying nearest to Washington's headquarters, were commanded by that Southern-Scotsman, Lachlin McIntosh, and strung along within sight of the road were Huntingdon's Connecticut militia, Conway's Pennsylvania troops, Varnum's Rhode Islanders, and Muhlenberg, Weeden, Patterson, Learned, Glover, Poor, Wayne, and Scott on the extreme front of the embattled camp. Hadley Morris, still with Wayne's division, messed with Captain Prentice, but found himself often attached to "Mad Anthony's" personal staff in the capacity of messenger, for the Quaker general occupied a house in a most exposed quarter, some distance beyond the line of defences, and was in constant communication with the Commander-in-Chief.

Hadley, indeed, scarce knew whom he served. At first his wound had incapacitated him from

participating in much of the work which fell to the lot of the rank and file, and as he rode one of the fleetest horses in the American camp he came to be looked upon as a sort of volunteer aide, for he had never been regularly mustered into the service. He often saw Lafe Holdness in the camp and was not surprised, therefore, one day, when he had been sent post-haste to General Washington with some papers from Wayne, to find the Yankee in the front room of the Potts cottage in close conversation with His Excellency.

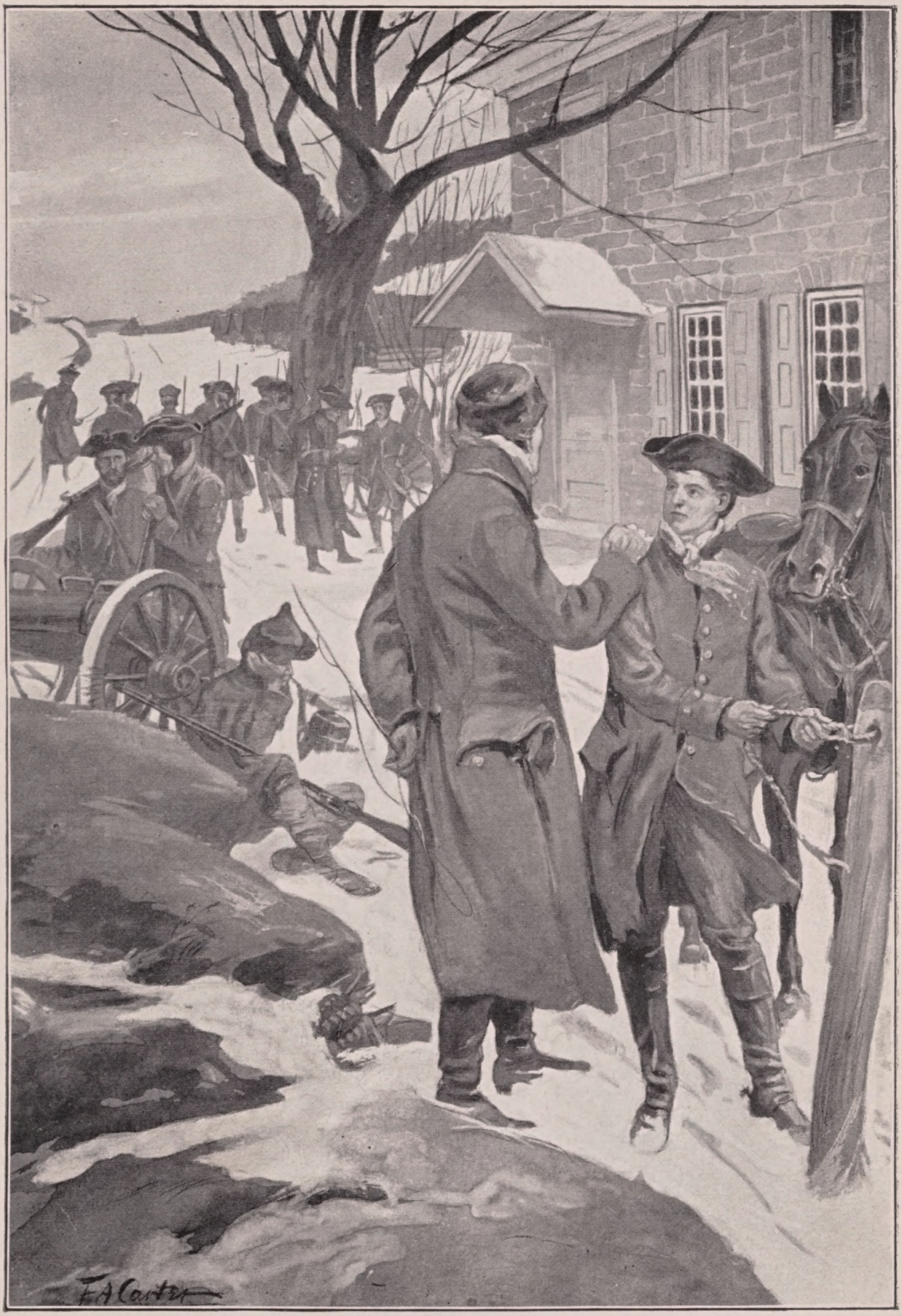
Hadley never entered the presence of the great man without in a measure feeling that sense of Washington's superiority which he had experienced when first he saw him, and he stood at one side now, ill at ease, waiting for a chance to deliver his packet. The Commander had a way of seeing and recognizing those who entered the room without appearing to do so—if he were busily engaged at the time—and suddenly wheeling in his chair and pointing to the boy, said in a tone that made Hadley start:

"Is this the young man you want, Master Holdness?"

"I reckon he'll do, Gin'ral—if he can be spared," Lafe replied, with the usual queer twist to his thin lips. "He's gettin' more important around here than a major-gin'ral, I hear; but ef things won't go quite ter rack an' ruin without him for a few days, I guess I'll take him with me on this little ja'nt."

Hadley blushed redly, but knew better than to grow angry over Lafe's mild sarcasm. His Excellency seemed to understand both the scout and his youthful friend pretty well. "I have a high opinion of Master Morris," he said, kindly. "Take care of him, Holdness. It is upon such young men as he that we most earnestly depend. Some of us older ones may not live to see the end of this war, and the younger generation must live to carry it on."

Hadley did not think him austere now; his eyes were sad and his face worn and deeply lined. Not alone did the rank and file of the American army suffer physically during that awful winter; many of the officers went hungry, too, and it was whispered that often Washington's own dinner was divided among the hollow-eyed men who guarded his person and sentineled the road leading to the little stone house.



"HADLEY, THAT IS A GREAT MAN YONDER"

Lafe nodded to the boy and they withdrew. On the road outside the scout placed his hand upon Hadley's shoulder. "Had, that's a great man in yonder," said he, in his homely way. "You 'n' I don't know how great he is; but there'll come folks arter us that will. He's movin' heaven an' airth ter git rations for this army, an' they ain't one of us suffers that he doesn't feel it."

They went on in silence, Hadley leading his mare, until they came to the sheds behind an old country inn not far from headquarters. Here Holdness had left his great covered wagon and team of sturdy draught horses. Despite the condition of affairs in the territory about Philadelphia, the scout retained his character of teamster, and continued to go in and come out of the city as he pleased. How he allayed the suspicions of the British was known only to himself; but evidently General Washington trusted him implicitly.

Hadley, as they drove slowly through the camp, gave the black mare over into Captain Prentice's care. Not until they were beyond the picket lines of the Americans entirely did Holdness offer any explanation of the work be-

fore them. "We're goin' ter stop at a place an' take a load of grain into Philadelphy," he began. "I 'greed ter do this last week. I ain't sayin', but I'd like to turn about an' cart it inter aour lines; but that can't be. The man 'at owns it is a Tory, 'an he's shippin' his grain inter town so as to save it from the 'Mericans. He's got his convictions, same's we've got ourn; 'taint so bad fur him to sell ter them Britishers as it is fur some o' these folks 't claim ter have the good of the cause at heart, an' yet won't take scrip fur their goods."

When they came to the farmer's in question the great wagon was heavily loaded with sacks of grain. Hadley, who had so plainly seen the need of such commodity in the American camp, suggested that they take a roundabout way, and deliver the sacks of grain to their friends instead of to the British, without the Tory being any the wiser. "And spile my game?" cried Lafe, with a chuckle. "I guess not. Reckon His Excellency wouldn't thank us for that. I'm wuth more to him takin' the stuff into Philadelphy than the grain would be. We're goin' in there to git some information, Hadley, my son—this ain't no pleasure ja'nt."

"But what can I do?" queried the boy.

"What you're told—and I reckon you've l'arned that already with Gin'ral Wayne. A boy like yeou can git 'round 'mongst folks without being suspicioned better 'n me. It's whispered, Hadley, that them Britishers contemplate making a sortie on aour camp. You know the state we're in, an' if the British mean to attack we must know it and be ready for them. Every crumb of information you kin pick up must be treasured. I'll take ye to Jothan Pye, and yeou can be an apprentice of his. He can git yeou access to the very houses in which some o' them big bugs is quartered. If plans are really laid for an attack you'll hear whispers of it. Them whispers yeou'll give to me, sonny. D'ye understand?"

Hadley nodded. He understood what was expected of him; also, he understood that the mission would be perilous. But he had been in danger before, and he did not lack some measure of confidence in himself now.

The huge wagon rumbled on toward the British lines. When they were halted Lafe managed to give such a good account of himself that he was allowed to pass through with little

questioning, for the grain was assigned to the quartermaster's department. Hadley was simply considered a country bumpkin, who had come into town to see the sights. Soon the old scout and the boy separated, Hadley making his way swiftly to the Quaker's habitation near the Indian Queen, where good Mistress Pye welcomed him warmly.

Friend Pye was a merchant, and dealt in such foreign commodities—particularly in West India goods—as were in demand among the British officers. As previously noted, the Quaker had lived so circumspectly in the city throughout the war that his loyalty to the king was considered unshaken by his Tory neighbors, and yet he was so retiring and so worthy a man that the Whigs had not considered him a dangerous enemy. Now that the British occupied the city he was the same; he showed no exultation as did the Tories; nor did he display any feeling of vexation at the coming of the enemy. Business all the time was the good Quaker's motto—or seemed to be. He appeared to be too guileless to need watching.

If anybody noted, during these cold days of middle winter, that Friend Pye had a new

'prentice boy it was not particularly remarked. The gossip of camp and barracks had taken the place of ordinary interests for the people of the occupied city. All conversation was tinged with military life and happenings. Friend Pye's young man carried goods to the Norris house, where My Lord Rawdon—that swarthy, haughty nobleman, both hated and feared by all who came in contact with him—was quartered, and even to Peter Reeves' house on Second Street, where Lord Cornwallis held a miniature court. Hadley was, in his new duties, quick and obliging. The British officers often remarked that, for a country bumpkin, Pye's apprentice was marvelously polite, and possessed some grace and gentleness. But all the time Hadley Morris was keeping both his eyes and ears open, and when Holdness came to the Quaker's house under cover of the night he told him all he had heard and seen, even to details which seemed to him quite worthless.

"Ye never know how important little things may be," Holdness told him. "It's the little things that sometimes turn aout ter be of th' greatest value. Stick to it, Had."

But one day Hadley experienced something

of a shock—indeed two of them. He was walking through Spruce Street carrying a bundle which his employer had entrusted him to deliver at an officer's residence, when a carriage came slowly toward him. It was a very fine coach—much finer than any he had observed in Philadelphia thus far—and it was drawn by a pair of magnificent horses. The horses were bay, and before many moments the boy, with a start, recognized them. His eyes flew from the handsome team to the coachman, perched on the high seat.

The bays were the same he had seen so often while Colonel Creston Knowles was a guest at the Three Oaks Inn, and the driver was William, the silent Cockney. The coach window was wide open and Hadley could see within. There on the silken cushions was seated Mistress Lillian herself! The boy stared, stopping on the edge of the walk in his surprise. Of course, he might have expected to find the British officer and his daughter here, yet he was amazed nevertheless.

But he was evidently not the only person astonished. Lillian saw him. She leaned from the carriage window, and, for an instant, he

thought she was about to call to him. Then she glanced up at the driver's seat and said something to William. At once the bays began to trot and the carriage rolled swiftly past. But Hadley had looked up at the driver, too, and for the first time saw and recognized the person sitting by William on the high perch.

William was gorgeous in a maroon livery; the person beside him was in livery also, and evidently acted as footman. But despite his gay apparel Hadley recognized this footman instantly. It was Alonzo Alwood, and as he gazed after the retreating carriage, the American youth was conscious that Lon had twisted around in his seat and was staring at him with scowling visage.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CHASE AND A SURPRISE

ALTHOUGH Hadley Morris had once before left Philadelphia because of Lon Alwood's presence there, it had never crossed his mind during his present visit that his one-time school rival was still in the city. News from the vicinity of the Three Oaks Inn had filtered into the American camp at Valley Forge but slowly, and he had every reason to suppose Lon at home, now that active fighting between the two armies had ceased. And to see him again here —and sitting on the box of Colonel Creston Knowles' carriage! It was certainly startling enough.

Colonel Knowles had come to Philadelphia with his daughter instead of returning to New York. They had established themselves for the winter and probably lived in good style, when they were served by servants in livery. And

that Lon Alwood, the New Jersey farmer's son, should don a livery and act as footman for the British officer, made Hadley, when he thought it over, smile scornfully. There was a deep-rooted prejudice in the young American's mind against liveried servants. The spirit of liberty which was so much a part of the life of the Colonies did not inspire scorn for any honest labor; but working for wages for an employer was far different, to the mind of the simple American of that day, from serving a master in livery. Slavery was practiced both in the North and South then (strange that men fighting for their own freedom could keep others in bondage), and the liveried servant was looked upon as scarcely above the grade of the black bondman. Indeed, the blacks themselves looked down upon white servants.

His recognition by Lon worried Hadley not a little. He was not much afraid of Mistress Lillian; even had the doughty Colonel himself seen him he would not have felt such a sinking of the heart as he experienced now. He had learned that Colonel Creston Knowles was a man of some honor; he would be an open enemy. But Lon Alwood would be secretive and

work, mole-like, to injure him. He did not expect to be apprehended by a file of British soldiers at the next corner and examined as to his presence in the city ; but he knew his enemy would work secretly until he discovered his hiding place, and would strive to learn why he was in Philadelphia.

He hurried to complete his errand for Master Pye, and then returned, by as many unfrequented ways as possible, to the Quaker's domicile. Holdness was not in the town just then. Following out his character of teamster, he had gone south and would return in a day or two with the household goods of a Tory family that was moving into the city. So Hadley could not consult with the scout, nor did he wish to leave Philadelphia without seeing him.

Friend Pye counseled his going abroad only by night, and offered to send another messenger on errands; but Hadley knew he had been brought to Philadelphia for that very purpose, to gain entrance to the officers' quarters, to look and to listen—aye, to be a spy for the cause upon which his heart was set. People have ever decried the spy system in war time; but if war is to be, espionage of the enemy is hon-

orable. Major André was as truly a patriot as Nathan Hale.

However, Hadley did not go out of the good Quaker's house without fearing to meet Lon Alwood in the street again. Knowing that Colonel Knowles was in the city the boy made inquiry and learned that he had hired a fine residence on Spruce Street and that Mistress Lillian was already a belle among the officers. After dark one night he passed the place and saw it lit up from basement to garret, while a merry party of visitors were going in to some entertainment. Colonel Knowles was very popular in Philadelphia that winter.

But Holdness did not return within the time expected and Hadley grew more and more anxious. Late one afternoon, while he was hurrying home to Master Pye's abode, he turned a corner suddenly and came plump upon the person he most feared to meet, strolling leisurely along the street. Lon was not dressed in the livery of a footman now; he recognized Hadley as quick as the latter knew him, and stopped square in the walk, grinning.

"Humph! I thought I'd run across you if you was here, some day," said the Tory youth.

He glanced swiftly around, Hadley believed to see if there was a soldier in sight, or anybody to aid in the capture of the American.

"No you don't, Lon Alwood!" Hadley exclaimed, and seizing his enemy he threw him bodily into the area of a house beside which they had halted, and instantly took to his heels himself. Lon's shout of dismay sounded in his ears as he rounded the first corner, and lent speed to his feet. He knew the other would raise the hue and cry and be after him; but he dared not run far. The city was under martial law and he feared he would be stopped and questioned if he continued to hasten. He did not propose to return to Friend Pye's and get that worthy man into trouble, either; so he cut across town, keeping to the narrower streets and lanes as much as possible. In a few moments, however, he distinguished the sound of a tumult in his rear. He had not shaken off the vindictive Alonzo and, having gathered a party of helpers, the Tory youth was hard on his heels.

Hadley darted into a narrow lane behind Spruce Street; but after running up this for several rods he found it to be a sort of blind alley, and he came up with a crash in the dusk

against a high board fence. What was beyond this fence he did not know; but he feared what was behind him more, so, leaping up and grasping the top of the barrier, he drew himself upon it and, scarce looking, dropped into the yard. It was a garden in which he landed—a garden with several fruit trees, now with barren limbs, and a square arbor evidently covered by luxuriant grapevines in summer. The vines interlaced with each other so now that, bare as they were, the place offered some little shelter, and he darted within. What was his horror and astonishment to find that it was not wholly unoccupied.

He saw a figure standing between him and the opposite entrance to the arbor—a figure which turned at the sound of his step. It was a girl in a long cloak, the hood of which almost hid her face, and as she had her back to the light he had no suspicion of her identity until she laughed outright. "Why, Master Hadley Morris! is this the way you come to visit us?" she cried. It was Lillian Knowles herself. So excited had he been by the chase instigated by Lon Alwood that Hadley had paid no attention to the fact that he was in the vicinity of the

residence occupied by the Colonel and his daughter. He was breathless—both from his recent exertions and from surprise at thus meeting the girl again.

"I saw you on the street the other day," Lillian said, smiling and coming nearer to him. "I would have invited you to come and see me, but I remembered that a very dear enemy of yours was near, so I desisted. Did you see Alwood?"

"Yes; I've seen him," exclaimed Hadley. "I—I—in fact, Mistress Knowles, I've seen too much of him. I—I did not know this was your father's house. I was just crossing the yard to the other street—"

"Something is the matter with you, Hadley," she said, quickly. "What is it? What are you doing here?"

"Trying to escape from a mob that Alwood has set on my heels," exclaimed Hadley, desperately.

"What have you done?"

"Why, you surely know I am in the enemy's country?"

"Are you here in the city to spy for Mr. Washington?"

"I have been working for a merchant here for some time," he said, evasively. "But Lon knows that I carried dispatches once, and he will have a good story to tell against me if I am caught—there's no doubt of that."

"Why, he shall be punished for this!" the girl exclaimed. "I will tell my father—"

"That won't help me any if I am caught," declared Hadley, hastily. "You have been kind to me before, and I thank you. But I must go now—"

Suddenly there was shouting in the direction of Spruce Street. The girl darted swiftly out of the arbor, and when Hadley followed he saw her cloak disappearing around the corner of the house. He ran after her, but happily for his safety, he was not in view of the street when she returned. She stopped him instantly.

"Do not go out there, Hadley!" she whispered. "There is a crowd there. I do not see Alwood, but they are looking for somebody and likely it is you. Come with me—quick!"

She turned toward a long window which opened upon a low gallery over the snow-covered lawn. He caught her cloak and stayed her an instant. "You endanger your own

safety, Mistress Lillian," he declared. "If they find me in your house—"

"I hardly think they will dare search the residence of Colonel Creston Knowles," she said, haughtily. "Follow me, sir." She could be as commanding as the Colonel himself when she wished, and Hadley, unable to see a better way out of his difficulty, obeyed. The window was unlatched—evidently left so by herself when she had gone out for a walk in the fresh air. She locked it at once when they were within. The room into which the American youth was ushered was a long drawing room, much finer furnished than any apartment he had ever been in before.

"Now you will sit down and be my guest until those people go away," Lillian said, smiling, and recovering her composure. "You may be a rebel, but I don't think a boy like you can really do us very much harm."

"A boy like you" rather took down Hadley's good opinion of himself, but he was grateful for her kindness. "I only hope I will cause you no inconvenience, Mistress Lillian," he said, sitting upon a cushioned chair, and ill enough at ease in these strange surroundings. His young

hostess pulled a silken bell-cord which hung by the door and a moment later a broad black face appeared at the entrance to the drawing-room.

"Bring some tea and cakes, Eliza," the girl commanded.

"Yes ma'am," and the head bobbed.

"And Eliza!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"When Alwood comes in, have him wait in the servants' room. I do not wish him up here just now. Remember, Eliza!"

"Yes, ma'am," and after rolling her eyes at Hadley, who sat in the darkest corner of the room, the servant retired.

"But what will your father say?" stammered Hadley. "I am afraid he will not like you to treat me so kindly. You know he is a bitter enemy of my uncle—"

"But neither father nor I believe you are like your uncle, Hadley Morris. At first father did not know but you might be aware of the contemptible course which Ephraim Morris has taken; but he was later convinced that you knew nothing."

"I assure you," Hadley said, eagerly, "that I know nothing about my uncle's affairs. I cannot

help pitying his condition—there on the farm all alone—but he has turned me out of his house for fighting with the American forces—"

"Have you really been in a battle, Hadley?" cried the girl, with interest.

"Yes. I fought at Brandywine and at the Warren Tavern, and again at Germantown. I was wounded when your people surprised General Wayne at Paoli, too."

"Why! I had no idea you were so bad a rebel!" she cried, yet smiling. "I fear I have made a mistake in asking such a terrible person into the house. But you have really been in battle? Do you know, I almost wish I were a boy that I might be a soldier. Of course, we can't really call you rebels soldiers—"

"Is it fair, Mistress Lillian, to invite me here and treat me as kindly as you do, and yet say things like that?" the boy interrupted, his voice shaking.

But she laughed again merrily. "Ah, well; father says you bumpkins fight well. And father has a pretty good opinion of you, too, Master Morris. But your uncle—"

She shook her head and her face clouded again. "You must know," Hadley said, "that

I am unaware how my uncle has injured Colonel Knowles. That he has done so I can plainly see by the way you—and your father—speak of him."

"You know nothing about it?"

"Not the first thing," declared the boy, with emphasis.

"I have a good mind to tell you," said the girl, leaning forward, and resting her chin upon one palm, while she looked at her visitor earnestly. "Ephraim Morris has in his possession a lot of money which belongs to us, and perhaps—well, if you knew where he kept it—"

"I would not betray him—not even if I knew him to be in the wrong," said Hadley, decidedly. "So do not hope for that."

"Well, I shall tell you anyway," the girl returned. "Then you can judge for yourself. For the time may come, when your uncle is dead, that you will be in a position to see that we obtain our rights."

CHAPTER XIX

ONE SIDE OF A STORY

Mistress Lillian was interrupted by the reappearance of the black woman. Eliza brought a light table into the corner where Hadley and his hostess sat, and placed thereon a tray with a steaming urn and a plate of cakes. Then she said, before retiring: "Dar's a hull passel o' folks in de street, honey. What yo' s'pose dey wants? Yo' pah ain't home, an' dey been s'archin' some ob de houses, too." The black woman looked hard at the visitor while she spoke. Evidently she did not approve of him.

"Is William downstairs?" asked Lillian, calmly.

"Yaas, Mis' Lillie."

"Tell him to allow nobody to enter the lower door, then."

The black woman retired, and the girl said

to her companion: "They will be tired of looking for you, after a while, Master Morris; but I shall not let you go until it is real dark." Then she poured the tea (Hadley had tasted none since the war began) and drew her own chair sociably to the table. "Now, I am going to tell you all about father and me—you know, I have no mother, as you have none. My mother has been dead a long time," said his hostess.

"My father, like a great many younger sons of English families, entered the army, that being almost the only career open to him. He did not take kindly to books, I believe, and his father, who was quite a famous merchant of Liverpool, could not make a tradesman of him. In truth, they called him 'wild,' which, in his case, I think, meant that he was spirited and headstrong," she added, with an assumption of womanly dignity quite charming to see. "Most boys are so, I guess—that is, boys who grow up to be anybody. The army was really a good place for him, for there one learns to obey, you know.

"But poor grandfather did not understand it. There is a strain of Quaker blood in the

Knowleses, and they did not approve of a military career. Besides, father had three older brothers, and they were jealous of him, because, as the youngest child, he had, while still a boy been the one best loved by grandfather. So all his little faults and escapades were magnified to grandfather by my uncles—oh, I shall never forgive them for that! Had they been honorable men, instead of grasping money-grubbers, none of this trouble would have come to us.

"Grandfather did not approve when father entered the army. He was forever trying to get father to sell his commission and come into his counting-room again. But, finally, the regiment was ordered to Canada, and while there father met my dear mother and married her. She was part French, and although she was only a factor's daughter, she was a lovely and accomplished lady. But the three elder brothers must have filled grandfather's mind with very ugly stories about her and about father's course in Canada, for he did not send father his blessing when he heard of the marriage, and seldom wrote to him thereafter. When father got a furlough and took mother home to Eng-

land with him (that was when I was born, Master Morris), he did not go near his father's house.

"By and by grandfather died, and when at last we heard the news, we learned that the old merchant had left everything, but a very small bequest, to my uncles. Father's regiment was about to be ordered home, then, and he and I (my mother was already dead) went back to England. The older brothers were governing the business which grandfather had left them, and had made a great many changes. They did not welcome my father's coming, for they feared that he would strive to get his share of the estate. But we would not have dragged the name into the courts," declared Lillian, proudly. "We had enough to live upon, for my mother had some property, which was settled upon me when she died.

"But father was determined to learn if a true will had been probated, and he went to see his father's old attorney. There he was given a letter which grandfather had left for him before he died. In it the poor old man stated that he had become doubtful regarding the truth of the stories which had been repeated to him against his youngest son yet he did not wish his money

to go to a spendthrift and roisterer. Oh, my uncles were bad, bad men!

"The letter went on to state that the sum of ten thousand pounds had been placed in the hands of my grandfather's oldest and most trusted clerk, entirely unbeknown to the three brothers, against the time when my father should come back to England. If, in the opinion of this clerk, who had been in grandfather's confidence for twenty years, my father had become settled in life, and if he could disprove some of the tales which had been repeated against his character while he was with the army in Canada, the ten thousand pounds were to be handed to him without further delay; but if the clerk was not satisfied in his own mind that father was deserving of his confidence, the money was to be placed in trust for me.

"The last months of poor grandfather's life had evidently been very unhappy, for without doubt he feared that he had treated his youngest son unkindly. He had come to distrust his older sons, for he found them hard and grasping. Wishing to live his last days in comparative peace, he had given his old clerk this

responsible charge, entirely unknown to his other sons. Nobody but grandfather and Ephraim Morris—"

"Who?" gasped Hadley, almost leaping from his chair.

"Your uncle, Hadley; he was grandfather's trusted clerk."

Hadley turned pale and listened to the remainder of the story in bitterness of spirit.

"Well, nobody but grandfather and your uncle knew about this secret bequest until father found the letter. But then Ephraim Morris had disappeared. Of course, Hadley, I would not say that he ran away with the money; grandfather died sometime before we returned to England and there had been a good many changes made in the counting rooms since my uncles came into possession. All we could find out about Morris was that he had sailed for America. We could not learn at first that he had ever landed here in the Colonies.

"There was a possibility that he had gone to search for my father, who remembered Ephraim as a very exact, trustworthy man, and for a long time we believe that he was searching for us in the Canadas. Then we thought him dead, for

father would not believe that the nature of a man could so change as to make honest Ephraim Morris a thief!"

Hadley winced and opened his lips to ask: "Might he not have believed that your father was dead?"

"Ah, but he knows better now," Lillian returned, quickly. "Nay, there is no excuse for him. He denies everything—my grandfather's trust and all. Father knows not what to believe—whether he still possesses the trust money, or that my uncles found out about the ten thousand pounds, made Ephraim disgorge it, and paid him to come to the Colonies and hide himself."

"But how did you finally learn where Uncle Ephraim was?" queried the boy.

"Quite by accident. Somebody whom father knew, had traveled in this part of the country, and remembering the disappearance of a certain Ephraim Morris, having learned some of the particulars from my father, was curious enough to make inquiries when he heard the name mentioned in Trenton. Your uncle has some interests there, has he not?"

"I know little about his money affairs,"

declared Hadley, sadly. "He is called a miser by the neighbors and he is as secret as a miser about his private possessions. I can give you no information." Yet he was thinking at the moment of the night he had spent in his uncle's house and seen the bags of what he believed to be gold, buried in the orchard. That money was a part, if not all, of the ten thousand pounds which had been entrusted to Ephraim Morris for Colonel Knowles; yet the boy could not bring himself to speak of it then. He was hearing one side of the story, and although he did not doubt Mistress Lillian's word, he knew that to two people on opposite sides of a question, the same facts take on different shades of meaning.

"Then this rebellion began in the Colonies," the girl went on to say, "and father was granted an exchange of regiments and we came across to New York. He had already tried to communicate with your uncle, but he got no satisfaction. So, when he could obtain a short release from his duties, we came into Jersey and—well, you know what little satisfaction father got, Master Morris. Your uncle denied everything and the country being so disturbed it is doubtful if father can

take any legal steps until the rebellion is put down."

Hadley flushed then and said quickly : "Perhaps that will take some time, Mistress Lillian. I fear if your father depends upon the re-establishment of the king's control of these Colonies to gain his will with Ephraim Morris, he is doomed to disappointment."

"Oh, but you do not really believe that, do you ?" cried the girl.

"I firmly do."

"Why, I am told that your people are ragged and starving—that you have neither clothes nor arms, nor ammunition out there in the wilderness."

"And for that very reason we shall win," Hadley declared, rising. "Men who will starve, and freeze, and suffer as they suffer, for a cause they believe is just, are bound to win !"

She looked at him, half amused and half impressed by his earnestness. At the instant, before she could again speak, the black woman, showing much excitement in her face, appeared again at the door of the room. "Lawsey, Mis' Lillie ! Dat' Lonzo Alwood's downstairs an' he wanter know if we seen anybody come t'rough

here? He say one o' dem rebel fellers is hidin' round erbout yere some ways. He wanter s'arch the house."

"How dare he!" exclaimed the girl, stamping her little foot. But the sudden danger brought Hadley back to practical things. He stepped softly to the window and peered out through the curtains. It was already dusk, but he could see that a crowd of people were in front of the house.

"I wish father were here!" exclaimed the girl. "Master Alwood will work for him no more—I can assure him of that. Go tell him, Eliza, that he cannot come in until Colonel Knowles returns." Then when the woman had gone, Lillian said to Hadley: "Do not fear, Master Morris. I invited you to come in and here you shall remain in safety."

As she spoke, however, Hadley darted back from the window. He had seen a face suddenly thrust against the pane. Somebody had mounted upon the porch, or gallery upon which the window opened, and had looked into the room. "Who was it?" cried Lillian, running to look out. Then she drew the curtains together and fastened them. "He has gone now," she breathed.

For a minute or two they stood silently watching each other. Hadley had grave doubts as to the outcome of the adventure. Surely the girl would not jeopardize her position and her father's to save him; yet he could not believe that she would willingly betray him to the provost guard. On her part Lillian was wondering whether she had better hide her guest, or brave the matter out and deny the soldiers the right to enter and search her father's premises.

Before she had found any plan, however, there came a thundering summons at the front entrance to the house. There was the rattle of arms, too, and both the young people turned pale. Notice of the throng of curious people who had gathered in Spruce Street had been taken by the authorities, and a file of soldiers sent to inquire into the matter. Lon Alwood, balked in his attempt to search the house himself for the fugitive had secured the co-operation of the soldiers and their officer the instant they came into the street.

"Remain here, Hadley—do not leave the room," commanded the girl, and running swiftly into the wide hall of the house she opened the

door herself before William could get to it. Hadley could hear all that went on outside, and, still standing in the darkest corner of the room, listened with beating heart.

Evidently the sudden appearance of the little mistress of the house startled the petty officer who had demanded admittance. "How dare you come to this door?" Hadley heard Lillian cry. "Do you know that this is the residence of Colonel Creston Knowles? What do you mean by it? Order these people to disperse at once!"

The officer was embarrassed by this declaration and stammered: "We was told, Mistress, that there was a rebel hiding here—a spy, belike—"

"In Colonel Knowles' house?" cried the girl. "How dare you suggest such a thing?"

"But this young man," began the officer, and at that Lon Alwood pushed himself to the front.

"Yes, he's in there!" exclaimed the Tory. "I just seen him with my own eyes in that room. You can't fool me. I hope I know Had Morris when I see him."

At that Hadley shook with sudden fear and looked about wildly for some means of escape.

CHAPTER XX

COLONEL KNOWLES' EYESIGHT IS POOR

LILLIAN KNOWLES had shown him some kindness ere now, but naturally Hadley could not look to her to risk her own reputation to save him from capture. That would be asking too much of even the best friend he had. Whether the girl believed him "not very dangerous," or not, he was a rebel in her eyes, and her father would certainly be displeased did she do anything to injure her reputation for loyalty in the eyes of his brother officers.

Hadley strode to the window. Was it possible for him to make a dash after opening the swinging casement, get across the lawn, and again lead his pursuers in a chase through the city streets? It was dark now, and the chances for escape were better than they were when Lon Alwood first raised the hue and cry after him, but before he was unwise enough to open the

window he caught sight of something glistening outside. He looked closer. It was the buttons upon the coat of a guard who stood directly in front of the window.

Meanwhile the voices in the hall had grown louder.

"You shall not come in here!" Hadley heard Lillian declare. "When the Colonel comes home, Lon Alwood, he will have you sent back to your father's. You shall not work here any longer."

"I don't care what he does to me. I've got about tired of being dressed up like a monkey an' waitin' on you, anyway," growled Lon. "But you can't hide Had Morris from me. He's a spy—"

"I'm sorry, Mistress Knowles," interrupted the officer, "but it may be possible that the man this fellow says came in here, has taken refuge in your house without your being aware of it."

"I tell you, sir, that you enter these premsies at your peril!" exclaimed the plucky girl. "Every person in this house is under the protection of Colonel Knowles, my father. Now begone."

"He won't protect Had Morris!" cried Lon. "He ain't got any love for him."

Hadley knew this very well. Colonel Knowles was a fairer-minded man than he had at first supposed, but he was pretty sure that the British officer could not bring himself to the point of hiding an acknowledged spy of the American army in his house. The Colonel knew that Hadley carried messages to and from General Washington, and he would suspect that his presence in Philadelphia was not entirely innocent. Had there seemed any possible mode of escape, the boy would have tried it, rather than have remained longer to embarrass the Colonel's daughter.

But there was an interruption now, and one that brought no hope to Hadley—rather his fear was increased. A shout arose from the crowd outside, and then the ring of horses' hoofs reached the fugitive's ears. The keen, wintry air, which blew into the house and made the fire on the open hearth roar up the chimney, bore the sounds plainly to him.

"Alwood! hold my horse. What is the meaning of this crowd before the door? Corporal, drive the rabble away."

It was the Colonel's voice, and the next instant he stood in the hall. "Daughter, you will get your death here. What is the matter?"

"If it please Your Honor," said the Corporal, in a subdued tone, "it was reported to me that a rebel spy was secreted here—"

"In my house?" exclaimed the Colonel, and his voice had no pleasant ring.

"It is not supposed, Your Honor, that he is here with your consent. He was followed here by this young man," and evidently the Corporal pushed Lon Alwood forward again to take the brunt of the Colonel's displeasure.

"You, Alwood!" exclaimed the officer, wrathfully. "Are you the stirrer up of this trouble? Get down there and hold my horse, sirrah! Have I to speak to you twice?"

"I'm not your body servant, Colonel Knowles," cried the Tory. "You can order them slaves around, but you can't order me that way. I tell you I seen him come this way, an' I seen him in the room, yonder—I looked through the window."

"Of whom are you speaking?" demanded the Colonel.

"Had Morris—that's the fellow," declared Lon.

"What! has all this throng come here to seize a boy?" cried the British officer, in amazement. "Ah, Alwood, you are one of those who nurse a hope of vengeance against any who may have obtained advantage of you, eh? I remember your feud with young Morris. But if the boy came this way, he would never take refuge in my house—"

"He's in that room, I tell you!" cried the excited Lon. "See! Look at her standin' before the door to hide him!"

And it was true that Lillian, in her fear for Hadley's safety, had taken her stand in front of the drawing-room door, as though to forbid entrance there. With a single stride the Colonel was at her side. Despite the pleading in her eyes, he put her away with a firm but kind grasp, and threw back the draperies before the door. The dusk filled the room, but Hadley, standing motionless at the farther end, was sure that the Colonel could see him. Indeed, the British officer seemed looking squarely at him,

until, as he swung on his heel to go, the terrified youth observed that the Colonel's eyes were closed!

"I see nobody here, Corporal," he said. "That fellow is doubtless mistaken." Then to Lon he said, sternly: "Go to William and get your wages, sirrah! And do not let me see you about here again. Corporal, clear the street!"

The next moment the door slammed and the danger was over. Hadley heard Lillian utter almost a sob of relief. "Oh, father, dear!" she exclaimed; "I was so afraid—"

"Tell me nothing at present, daughter," said the Colonel, sternly. "I—I have business for an hour in my room. At the end of that time I shall wish to see you in the drawing-room. Be ready for me." He mounted the stairs, calling on William, the servant man, to follow him, and a moment later Lillian entered the room where she had left her frightened visitor.

Hadley went forward to meet her, at once. "I cannot thank you enough," he declared, brokenly. "And your father—"

But she was laughing almost hysterically. "Dear father just shut his eyes and declared he

didn't see you—which was very true. But he has given you only an hour, Master Morris. You heard what he said?"

"I would like to thank him," said the boy, earnestly.

"Well, you had better wait until the rebellion is put down, before you do that," and she laughed. But he did not wince at her remark, this time. "That Lon Alwood will not get another such place as he had here. I guess he will be sorry enough. He had good wages and not much to do, and his father begged the Colonel to take him and look after him. His brother is somewhere in town, too, with a British troop, I believe."

"Well, I shall have to get away at once, and I hope I shall not cross the paths of either Lon or his brother Brace," Hadley said. "Do you think they have gone from the front of the house yet?"

"I do not know; but you had better wait a little and then go by the rear, Hadley. I hope you will get away safely this time; but if you come into Philadelphia again perhaps I shall have to really look upon you as an enemy," and she laughed.

She offered him her hand and as he took it, Hadley said, earnestly: "I want you to tell your father that if ever I have the chance to bring Uncle Ephraim to his senses, and can urge him to do the right and honest thing in the matter of that trust money, I shall do so. Or, if there be no hope of that, if I ever fall heir to his property and the money left by your grandfather can be found, it shall be restored to you at once."

A little later, after Lillian had put on her cloak and gone herself to see that the coast was clear, the young American left the Colonel's residence, scaling the fence in the rear to reach the lane. Fortunately it was pitch dark now and he was not likely to be observed. In half an hour he arrived at Master Pye's house and there found Lafe Holdness awaiting him. The scout and the Quaker had both begun to worry because of his unexpected absence. When he related his adventure of the early evening, Lafe at once counseled that he return to the Valley Forge camp.

"I mind what the Gin'ral said when we came away," remarked the old scout. "He said I was ter be careful of the younger gineration,

an' I reckon that means that I sh'd keep you outer a British prison. Yeou've done rale well, Had, and I know ye'll hate ter give it up; but ye'll hafter go. I'll find a way ter git ye aout ternight. I'm not goin' back myself jest yet."

But Hadley Morris was not destined to get out of the Quaker City so easily. While he and Holdness were discussing the matter of escape in the room behind Master Pye's shop, the good Quaker came in with his wig awry and a worried look upon his face. The shop was in the lower story of the merchant's dwelling, and the little room behind was used by the Quaker to sit in when business was not brisk, and was comfortably furnished. There were heavy curtains at the windows, which opened upon a back court, and it was made cozy by a cheerful fire on the hearth.

"What troubles thee, Friend Pye?" queried Holdness, his thin lips opening questioningly. "Has some customer got the best of ye in trade?"

"This is no time for sport or jest, Eliphalet Holdness. I fear the boy is in danger. Tell me, Hadley, of what manner of lad is this

Alonzo Alwood of whom thou wast speaking?"

"Lon Alwood! He hasn't followed me here?" gasped Hadley, leaping up.

"His appearance, Hadley? What is he like? I have just had a boy come in and trouble me by asking prices of goods which he evidently did not come to buy. And as he tried to get out to this end of the shop I was forced to fair drive him forth."

Hadley, in haste, gave a description of young Alwood. "It is the same," declared the merchant. "And I believe he is still waiting without for thee, Hadley."

"I shall certainly get you into trouble, Master Pye—and Lafe, too!" cried Had. "I must go at once. He may bring soldiers here to search your house, and you can scarcely keep them out as Colonel Knowles did."

"Don't thee fear for me, Master Morris," said the Quaker.

"But I shall get Holdness into trouble, too."

"Is the fellow still outside, Friend Jothan?" asked the scout, quickly.

"I believe he is lurking in the shadow of the house across the street."

"Let him stay there, then," said Lafe. "There's a back way out of this place, I hope. Who lives in the house in the rear?"

"Neighbor Harris—and a rabid Tory, Friend Holdness."

"Bad! But at least we can get through his yard?"

"If it be not watched. He has a fierce dog, but it will be chained."

"You shall not go, Lafe!" declared Hadley. "Why should you risk your safety in getting me out of town? If they suspect you, that will end your usefulness to General Washington for good and all."

"Now, Had, don't yeou be too positive that I'm goin' ter run any risk of that. Howbeit, I got ye inter this scrape an' I'm goin' to see ye through—don't forget that!" He had already opened one of the windows softly. The wintry air blew in keenly and Master Pye shut the door into the shop and went back to watch for customers after pressing Hadley's hand kindly. Both Hadley and Lafe put on their outer coats, and then, at a motion from the scout, the boy wriggled through the narrow casement and sprawled on the snow outside. "I'm after ye!"

breathed Holdness, softly, and in a moment he, too, was outside the house, stopping only to drop the window sash into place before leading the way to the wall which separated the yards of the two houses which, being set back to back, fronted on different streets.

Once at this wall Lafe gave Hadley a hand and boosted him until he could see over the barrier. All was quiet, and the dog-house was at the other end of the yard. The night air was so chill that evidently the brute had retired and was now asleep. This fact Hadley whispered to his friend. "Go on, then," returned Lafe. "Wait till I get astride of that there wall before ye drop. Then we'll laig it tergether if the dog comes out."

Being so much taller than his young companion, Lafe Holdness easily drew himself to the top. Then, when he whispered "Ready!" both of them dropped into Neighbor Harris' yard and started for the street beyond. But as Lafe had expected the dog woke up and came tearing out of the shelter, making the night ring with angry bayings. The suddenness of this vocal onslaught would naturally arouse the neighbors for rods around, and not alone was

the great brute to be feared because of his barking. His mighty leaps after the fleeing men that had dropped into his master's premises from the boundary wall, were too much for the chain. Before Lafe and Hadley got around the corner of the house the chain snapped and the dog was free!

Hadley, who was looking back, uttered a low cry of warning and increased his speed. But his comrade stumbled over some protuberance in the crusted snow and went down at full length. The boy heard the fall and swung about to aid his friend. He half drew the pistol he carried from beneath his coat; but then the thought that the explosion of the weapon would likely arouse the guard and bring swift inquiry, stayed his hand. The great hound, however, was almost upon the fallen Lafe. There was no time to hesitate if Hadley would save him from the jaws of the brute.

He leaped in the dog's path, and as the creature rose on its haunches, its jaws wide open and the froth flecking its slate-colored breast, the boy delivered a terrific kick which reached the exposed ribs. The dog's barking changed to a howl of agony, and it dropped

back without touching him, rolling over and over in the snow. It had been a most cruel blow, but it could not be helped, for the dog was fierce enough to have torn Lafe to pieces.

"Come on, Had!" muttered the scout, who had now risen, and in a moment they were in the street. Windows and doors were opening on all sides. They heard the owner of the watchdog—Mr. Harris—come out into his rear yard, and his voice rose in angry threats against the marauders. "He'll think it was some of the soldiers like enough," said the scout.

They did not dare run far, but on rounding the first corner dropped into a walk. There were plenty of the soldiery abroad, and occasionally a group of guards marched by, bound for the outskirts of the town. Hadley would have left his friend here and gone on alone, but the scout was insistent. He was determined to see the boy out of Philadelphia before thinking of his own safety.

"I'm all right, Had. I've pulled the wool over these Britishers' eyes so often that it's meat an' drink to me," he declared, with a chuckle. "Not but I've seen some tight places since this war broke aout; yet somehow, when

a man goes round carrying his life in his hand, as ye might say every day, it gits kinder like second nater to him!"

They hurried on, Lafe leading the way into the northern part of the town. He knew the position of almost every outpost and sentinel in the entire system of British guard lines, and soon after midnight he had taken his young friend safely past the last one and there were only the American pickets ahead of him. "You don't know the watchword to-night, but never you mind," he said to the youth. "Follow this road until you are stopped and you'll likely hit men of your own brigade. At least General Wayne's headquarters are in this direction. Perhaps I'll see ye in camp in a few days," and he wrung the boy's hand and set off on his return journey through the British lines, while Hadley, thankful indeed at his escape from the city, hurried away in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CALL OF DUTY

It was not yet sunrise, but the east was streaked with light and the stars were fading in the zenith when Hadley Morris, after a toilsome march across country, came in sight of the first sentinel on the line of American guards which enclosed the Valley Forge camp. The air was chill, and the snow, where the wind had not blown the frozen earth entirely bare, crackled under foot as one stepped. Hadley was warmly dressed, thanks to Friend Pye and his good wife, and his hands were encased in warm mittens knit by the Quakeress herself. The contrast between the boy and the man who stood back to him, leaning upon a rusty rifle, was startling.

For some time Hadley had seen nobody but well-fed and warmly-clad people; the soldiers he had observed in Philadelphia lacked for

nothing of a physical nature. He had almost forgotten what privations the patriot army were suffering. He stopped and gazed upon this scarecrow soldier with tears welling to his eyes and a feeling of sudden bitter hatred against the British who were having such easy times while the Americans starved and froze.

The poor fellow's shoes were broken until his feet in places touched the earth itself; his hose was worn in great holes, or clumsily darned and patched by his own numbed hands. His breeches were shrunk and torn and the shabby coat sadly rent. When he turned Hadley observed that the coat was held together by bits of string and a belt about his waist, and the shirt which was exposed showed evidence of being in as bad a state of repair as his other clothing. His hat was torn, too, and beneath its flapping brim hollow eyes—wolfish with hunger—stared out of a wilderness of disheveled hair and beard.

Hadley's heart smote him. He had been living in comfort and plenty with little thought for these poor fellows. Why, he had actually wasted food during the past week which would have made a new man of this poor wretch and

"WHO'S THERE?" CAME THE CHALLENGE

have put renewed life into his enfeebled frame! The sentinel saw him, and bringing up his weapon limped several paces nearer. Where he stepped upon a patch of snow his foot left a mark of crimson.

"Who's there?" came the challenge, hoarse as the croak of a raven.

"A friend."

"Forward here, and let me see you," commanded the sentinel. When he observed Hadley more clearly he said: "Why, 'tis but a lad."

Despite the hoarseness of the tone, the words were vigorously spoken. The eyes were keen. The rusty gun was handled as though the sentinel's mind was fully awake to the necessity for caution, though his hearing had been a bit dull. As Hadley drew nearer this question filled his mind entirely: Why was the man here?

Why was he in rags, with bleeding feet, bare hands, half covered limbs, body wracked with hunger—in every way suffering to the limit of human endurance? What power kept him at his post on this wind-swept hillside; what desire upheld him in his sufferings; what end did he see?

And while yet the boy's thought whispered these queries the man spoke again: "Ah-ha! I remember you, my lad. I have seen you with General Wayne. You're the boy who rides the black mare through the camp. Have you the countersign?"

"No," said Hadley, choking down the lump which rose in his throat at this example of human wretchedness. "I have just come out of Philadelphia, and I want to get to General Washington."

The sentinel saluted. "God bless him!" he said, quickly. "He came through the camp yesterday with them smug-faced gentlemen whom our Congress have sent here as a committee to see how well we're housed and fed. His Excellency stopped me and spoke to me—think of that now! Aye, but he did. He asked me if I could not find better shoes than these. I said: 'Your Honor, I've got powder and well run bullets. Them's better than shoes.' 'But your hands are bare and your shirt in ribbons,' says he. 'I'm not mindin' that, Your Honor,' says I. 'The winter 'll pass. Then we'll not need shoes nor shirts. Give us a chance to fight—that's all we ask,'—

and it's what we want! You're from the city, lad. You've not got a bite about you? mayhap you tucked a napkin o' food in your pocket when you started?"

"I was forced to flee in the night," declared Hadley, in sorrow.

"Well, it matters not," the man said sturdily. He tightened his belt a bit. "The morning air is keen and it gives one a ravenous appetite. March on, young sir. You will be stopped twice ere you come to Mad Anthony's house. Your mare is there, no doubt."

Hadley went on without replying. Somehow, the sturdy patience of this starving, freezing man was more pitiful than any cry of distress could have been. Hadley's eyes were blinded with tears as he stumbled on his way. Why were these things so? Why were men, fighting for a country which, if exhausted near at hand, was amply supplied with provisions and necessities in more distant parts, allowed to suffer so desperately? What made Valley Forge so famous? Nay, what made the treatment of the patriot army there so infamous? Merely the incapacity and jealousy of Congress.

And yet there was some small reason for the

doubt and fear in which that body of men held the idol of the army. Taught by history no less than by their own experience of the dangers of standing armies in a free state, and without a single example in history of a great military leader voluntarily retiring into private life when his immediate work was done, Congress feared the power held by Washington. If he were successful in leading this handful of patriots against the king, he might be king himself! They saw in him a possible dictator who, with a conquering army behind him, could grasp the government of the new confederation with a hand of iron and, instead of having become unshackled, the Colonies would have but exchanged a king's yoke for an emperor's!

Hadley's welcome from Captain Prentice and those who were interested in him near General Wayne's person, was warm. He had matters to report to the Commander-in-Chief himself and finding Black Molly in fairly good condition (although many of the horses of the army died from starvation at that season), he rode across the hills, past Huntingdon's line of entrenchments, past the encampment of Conway's troops

who were already murmuring against that misguided officer, and down into the hollow to the small stone house. General Washington received him kindly, listened to his report and the news he brought of Lafe Holdness, and dismissed him with an expression of satisfaction regarding his own work while in the city of the enemy.

The Commander-in-Chief was extremely occupied at the time. No man was busier in all the camp than this gentleman whom Congress feared. He had but just obtained authority from the short-sighted body of civilians whom the infant nation had elected to govern its affairs, to demand and seize provisions from those farmers in the neighhorhood of Philadelphia who were either hoarding their precious grain or selling it to the British for gold. The American commander paid in the scrip which was so distrusted even by those whose patriotism in other lines might not be doubted. Washington ordered the farmers within seventy miles of the encampment to thresh half their grain by the first day of February, and the remainder by March first, under penalty of having all seized as straw. News was brought after this

order was promulgated that some farmers had burned their grain rather than allow it to be taken by the Americans. These, indeed, were bitter weeks.

At about this time, some days after Hadley Morris returned from his visit to Philadelphia, a recruit who had been across into Jersey for a short term and had returned, brought news which worried the boy greatly. Old Ephraim Morris was ill, and none of the neighbors—not even those of Tory breed—attended him with any good will. The old man had managed to make so many enemies, and was so crabbed and hateful now that he was in ill health, that the neighbors had become disgusted with his crotchets. "He's too mean to live, anyway," declared the man who brought the news, brutally. "He's got barns filled to the eaves with grain. He can't sell to the British—they won't send across the river for it, for they fear our light-horse. But he wouldn't let us have a stalk of it all!"

Hadley was not supposed to hear this, but he did. The man might not have spoken so unkindly regarding Ephraim Morris, had he known that his nephew was within earshot.

But Hadley was troubled and he went to his friend, Captain Prentice, at once.

"Why, there's naught to keep you here if you will go," the officer declared. "You'd best not let General Wayne know that you are going, though. But you have not enlisted. It will not be desertion. And then, what matters it?" added the young man, sadly, "when so many are deserting?"

"I might be able to bring Uncle Ephraim to a better way of thinking and save all that grain for us," Hadley said, though he doubted the possibility of that himself. "If he needs me very much to attend him he may be reasonable now."

"You know best, lad. Yet according to thy own telling the old curmudgeon has little love for you. You may have your journey for your pains."

But Hadley, remembering his mother's oft expressed wish that he should be near his uncle if the old man needed him—as Ephraim had saved her and her son from absolute penury and want in the old country and brought her to this new land—he believed it his duty to return to the farm. So, without making any display of

his going, he mounted the black mare and turned her head toward the distant Delaware and the neighborhood in which he had lived most of his life in America.

He could not hope for any very warm welcome from Uncle Ephraim—not after the manner in which they had parted three months before. But when he finally reached the old place, and saw the evident neglect in the outbuildings and the old man himself tottering about his chores, attempting to do more than his failing strength would allow, his conscience condemned him. He had kept the promise he had made his mother literally, but not in the spirit in which she had requested it. Uncle Ephraim was too old to be by himself at all. Hadley saw that. Despite the farmer's unfairness and his bitter words, he should have remained and watched over him.

Yet even in his weakness the old man, when he saw his nephew, would not admit that he needed him. "So you've come back again, hev ye?" he snarled. "A bad shilling—a bad shilling! What d'ye want?"

Hadley smiled quietly. "Something to eat and a place to sleep. I'll do your chores for

you and—and get ready for your spring work. You need somebody."

"Who says I need anybody," cried the old man, stubbornly.

"You always hire somebody about this time. I can help you just as well. And I—I've got to work somewhere," added the boy with pardonable duplicity.

"Ha! got tired of the ragged reg'lars, heh? They tell me they're starving and desertin' up they're on the Schuylkill. They'll hang that Washington an' some o' them other rascals, an' that'll end it—that'll end it."

Hadley made no reply. He was determined to remain dumb under all reproaches and flings at his friends and the men whom he admired, for the sake of peace. His short campaining had taught him one thing, if nothing more. He had learned to keep still and not answer back.

"So you've come back ter live on me, heh?" began Uncle Ephraim again. But he did not assail his nephew quite as hard on this score as the latter expected. He grunted a little and finally said: "Well, you kin feed the stock, an' I'll go into the house. My rheumatism is

bad, an' these pesky boys round here are so lazy I can't git one ter suit me. It's a lazy age —nobody is willing to give an honest day's work for an honest wage."

"Did you work hard when you were a boy, Uncle Ephraim?" queried Hadley, suddenly.

"Indeed I did. Work! I reckon you'd think so, young man."

"But you weren't a farmer's boy?"

"No. I was a clark," said Mr. Morris, giving the word the old-fashioned pronunciation. "But we rose at six in my master's house and worked till nine at night. A lazy man could not stay there—no, indeed."

"Who was your employer, Uncle?"

Uncle Ephraim opened his lips, evidently to reply. Then he glanced at his nephew suspiciously. "That doesn't concarn you!" he snapped, and walked away, leaning on his gnarled hickory cane.

CHAPTER XXII

THE GRAIN

HADLEY made up his mind to bear silently all the little indignities which he knew Ephraim Morris would heap upon him now he had returned. He had even allowed Ephraim to be deceived regarding his reason for returning to the farm at this time. Had he frankly said that he had come to nurse and watch over him because he was old and needed somebody near, Miser Morris would have driven him away again. Hadley knew that. But some things were hard to bear. Especially was it hard when, at dark, the old man brought his nephew's supper into the barn and placed it on the cover of the feed chest. "I allow nobody inside my door now," Ephraim said, bitterly. "Since that rascally Brace Alwood was here with his troop of rogues I've kept everybody out, and I'll not change my way simply because

a lazy young beggar has come to live off me. There are blankets enough and the hay racks are warm."

"But suppose something should happen in the night?" suggested Hadley, doubtfully.

"What! and you've been playing soldier? Ha!" and the old man cackled in derision.

"I mean to you," returned his nephew, bluntly. "You might need me."

"Nothin's happened to me thus far, Master Lazybones!" cried the old man, flushing redly. "It seems you grow fearful of my health at a late day. Ha! I tell thee, Nephew, I've put what money I have scraped together in a safe place—where neither you nor others that want it shall find it when I'm gone."

Hadley wished to ask about the ten thousand pounds which Lillian Knowles said had been entrusted to Ephraim Morris's care by her grandfather, but dared not. He made no further objection to sleeping and eating in the barn; but a day or two later, finding a heavy cowbell, he hung it over the couch he had made for himself in the mow, and strung a cord from the bell to the rear door of the kitchen. "If anything should happen that you want me in

the night, or when I am working in the stable, you can pull that," he told his uncle, and the old man grunted but did not request him to take the rigging down.

He was really very feeble, and although he talked much about the work of the coming spring season, Hadley was quite sure that little would be done on that farm. He did everything in his power to make his uncle comfortable, but as far as appearances went, his efforts were not appreciated, and an ulterior motive suggested for everything he did. His one friend (the neighbors, even those of Tory beliefs kept away) was the old hound that had guarded the homestead for many a year. The beast followed its master about, whining betimes and looking wistfully into the wrinkled and time-seamed face. It seemed to realize as well as Hadley, that the old man's course was almost run—that, good or bad, his work for this world was well nigh over. And it was to the dog alone that Uncle Ephraim displayed any tenderness whatsoever. Occasionally his hand strayed to the loose skin on the hound's neck, or he rubbed its big ears. Hadley never remembered having seen the old man do even that before.

But there was something that could stir Uncle Ephraim into a semblance of life again, and it came within a few days of Hadley's reappearance at the farm. A courier, riding hastily down the wagon track, stopped to throw a printed bill at Uncle Ephraim's feet as he sunned himself on the woodpile. It was the order from General Washington, commanding the farmers to thresh their grain and have it ready for the teamsters of the American army. "Lafe Holdnes and his gang'll be along here shortly for your grain," the rider exclaimed as he spurred away again.

That was a bad time for Hadley. He had to listen to the old man vilify General Washington and the patriot cause without daring to open his lips. Indeed, he felt really sorry for Uncle Ephraim, for the cause of King George was as dear to the old man as the hope of liberty was to Hadley.

"Give my grain to them? That I'll not!" declared the farmer. "Never—never, I say!"

"But they'll pay you," Hadley said, timidly.

"Pay me—pay me in scrip that they won't exchange for gold themselves! They'd rob

me. But I'll burn the grain up—burn it up, barn and all—before they shall have it!"

But Hadley thought much upon the subject. His uncle's grain was stored in the old barn which stood some distance from the house, beyond the newer stable. The first structure had been erected before Uncle Ephraim had come to the place, and it was built of logs, with a roof of long shingles and a straw thatch on top. It would burn like tinder if the old man did set it alight. And all that good grain—it might mean so much to the army! A deep-rooted intention to thwart the old man's determination to destroy the product of his farm grew in the boy's mind.

He was glad now that he had been made to sleep in the cold and cheerless barn. As soon as he was assured that Uncle Ephraim was still that night he went to the grain barn, and by the light of a horn lantern hung on a peg, labored on the threshing floor until long after midnight. It was much too far away from the house for his uncle to hear the sound of the flail; but the boy was wearied enough when he finally crawled into the hayloft for a few hours' sleep.

The next night he labored even longer, and the third he worked until the cocks crowed for daylight. It was hard work to keep awake all day after performing this task; but Hadley remained silent when Uncle Ephraim scolded him for yawning about his work, and was only glad that the old man did not suspect the reason. Every night he had placed the result of his threshing into bags and shouldered them out of the grain barn, hiding them in an unused crib away from the other outbuildings. Before the teams which collected the grain for the American army came into the neighborhood he had more than half his uncle's harvest threshed out.

Holdness, whom Hadley had not seen since they parted that night outside the British lines, came one morning to warn the old man to have some of his grain ready within a few days, and Uncle Ephraim flew into such a rage that both the scout and Hadley were afraid for him. The boy begged his friend not to come again until he was ready to cart away the bags, and told him what he was doing at night.

"Good!" exclaimed the Yankee. "Yeou've got something in that head of yours, lad. I'll send somebody to-night to help you. No use

arousin' the old man any more. I kin see he's in a bad way."

Indeed, Ephraim Morris was getting extremely weak, and that night he made no objection when Hadley came into the kitchen and prepared the supper for them both. "You've l'arned ter cook in camp, I see," the old man said. "That's about the only thing ye seem to have l'arned that's any good to ye."

But he felt the need of human companionship, although he would not admit it, and he made some excuse to keep his nephew with him until it came his early bedtime. He even asked him about the battles he had seen, and what he did during the winter, and for the first time learned of his visit to Philadelphia.

"They made ye a spy, did they?" was his comment.

"Something of one, I suppose," Hadley admitted. "But somebody has to do that when there is war."

"Yes, yes; I s'pose so. But warn't ye afraid?"

"Not till I saw Lon Alwood."

"Huh! them boys air wuthless—an' I tell

Neighbor Alwood so. Did Lon tell the 'thorities that you was there?"

Glad to interest the old man, even in a tale which placed his own actions in a disadvantageous light, Hadley related how he had been pursued through the Philadelphia streets, and had finally taken refuge in Colonel Creston Knowles' garden.

"And so that man is there, too, is he?" exclaimed Uncle Ephraim, with interest.

"He and his daughter. She was with him over at Master Benson's. A very kind young lady she is, and saved me from being apprehended," and he told how.

"Ha! not such a bad girl," declared Uncle Ephraim. Then, as though remembering at last that he was a Tory, he reversed this decision. "The little hussy! Aiding in letting a spy escape, eh? That would sound nice for the daughter of this Colonel Creston Knowles, as he calls himself, if it became known, heh?"

"Surely, that is his name, Uncle," Hadley suggested. "You knew him yourself in the old country."

"Who told you that?" demanded the old man, angrily.

"Mistress Lillian."

The farmer dropped his eyes and muttered something which Hadley did not hear. Finally, however, the boy caught a word or two. "The boy was wild—wild, indeed. 'Twould do him no good."

But when Hadley went out and heard the old man bolt and chain the door, he wondered if Miser Morris was trying to excuse his course to himself—was trying to make his retention of the trust money belonging to Colonel Knowles appear right in his own warped mental sight?

CHAPTER XXIII

UNCLE EPHRAIM FULFILLS A VOW

HOLDNESS sent two neighbors, who could be trusted, to help Hadley with the grain that night, and before morning the last of it was threshed out and the bags removed from the barn. Uncle Ephraim never went into the place, but the straw was tossed back into the mows and looked in the dark as though it had not been touched. The boy hoped he was doing right; yet it seemed almost like stealing to make way with property which did not belong to him. Yet the need was so great—and Holdness had the scrip to pay the miser for his grain. The boy tried not to think of the unpleasant side of it, and to only contemplate the fact that by his efforts he had saved some very valuable provisions for the American army.

In the morning Uncle Ephraim appeared, but plainly showing evidences of his violent rage

the afternoon before. He was determined to keep his precious grain from the American army, and with his own shaking hands heaped straw and rubbish against the walls of the old barn in readiness to apply the torch before Holdness came for it. He did not ask Hadley to help him; perhaps he thought his nephew would refuse, if he did.

A neighbor, who was likewise a Tory, had called on the old man and told how those farmers who refused to thresh their grain and sell to General Washington's teamsters for the paper money issued by the patriot Congress, had been obliged to stand by and see their grain carted away perforce, while they were paid only for its value as straw, and that in the hated scrip. "They shan't have mine—they shan't have mine!" Hadley heard him mutter again and again. But when Uncle Ephraim went back to the house, after preparing his huge bonfire, he was all but exhausted. Had he dared to do so, the boy would have ridden off for a doctor to come and see the old man.

But there was really nothing the matter with him but the infirmities of age and the effect of

years of unnecessary privation. The possession of the trust money placed in his hands by his old master, the Liverpool merchant, had probably changed Ephraim Morris's whole nature. The sight of the gold had made him a miser. Its possession had stirred a very fiend within him, and while possessing plenty, he had begrudged himself, as well as those about him, even the necessary things of life.

There was nothing a doctor could do, and Hadley realized that. At noon he went into the house again, and Uncle Ephraim made no objections while he prepared the dinner. Indeed, the old man seemed rather glad to have somebody to talk to, and he showed plainly on what subject his mind was running, when he made his nephew repeat the story of his adventures in Philadelphia, and especially those connected with Colonel Knowles and his daughter. Uncle Ephraim sat in his arm-chair and listened, nodding his head now and then, but never looking into Hadley's eyes. He ate the dinner the boy prepared, in silence. He still sat at the table when his nephew went out again, and as Hadley opened the door, he heard his uncle mutter:

"No, no! I am too old. I cannot give it up!"

Hadley believed Uncle Ephraim was thinking of the trust fund; but he still dared not ask a question regarding it. After going out, however, he went into the orchard, wading through the knee-deep drifts, and looked at the place where he had seen the money bags buried so many months before. Perhaps—the thought made an unbidden tear come to his eyes—he would be able to dig that gold up and give it to Colonel Knowles, with a clear conscience, before long. Uncle Ephraim was surely growing weaker.

One of the neighbor's lads, whom Hadley knew, trotted heavily along the farm lane, late in the afternoon, and stopped to shout the news to the miser's nephew. "Lafe Holdness is down to the Three Oaks, with a lot of wagons and a troop of sojers on horseback!" declared the excited youth. "They're a-comin' over here tomorrer morning, arter Miser Morris's grain," and he dug his heels into his plow horse's sides and clattered on again.

Hadley hoped that his uncle had not heard, but when he looked around the corner of the

woodshed, there was the old man hobbling up and down before the back door, pounding his cane upon the well-beaten path and muttering to himself. It was quite evident that he had heard, and it completely soured him for the rest of the day. His smouldering rage against Lafe Holdness and the cause he represented made him "at outs" with his nephew, too, and Hadley was not allowed in the kitchen that night. The old man brought his supper out to him, and later when Hadley tried the back door, he found it barred against him. Uncle Ephraim had grimly shut himself up again.

It was useless to knock; Hadley knew that. He completed the chores and then went to bed in the loft of the horse-barn where the old cow-bell hung over his couch to awaken him if Uncle Ephraim should really need his presence at the house. He was therefore sound asleep when, rather late in the evening, the back door of the farmhouse was quietly opened, and his uncle, wrapped in a heavy greatcoat, came out. The sharp night air set the old man to coughing, but he closed the door behind him and went down the path which Hadley had shoveled and which

led from one outbuilding to another until, at its farther end, Uncle Ephraim stopped before the door of the old log structure in which, as he supposed, were stored the fruits of his fields which he was so determined should never be devoted to the cause of liberty.

He did not carry a lantern because he feared its light might be observed. In the pocket of his greatcoat was a flask of whale oil—almost the only burning fluid used by the colonists at that day. Approaching the log barn as though bent upon some crime against his neighbor's, instead of his own property, Ephraim Morris pulled the wooden stopper from this flask and sprinkled the contents upon the refuse piled against the walls. He did not open the door, which was fastened with a heavy padlock. In entering the building at night to thresh the grain, Hadley had drawn the staple which held the padlock, afterward driving it into the door frame again.

From the other outside pocket of his coat the old man brought forth a cowhorn containing gunpowder. Some of this he sprinkled in a sheltered corner, and then, with an old gun-flint and a bit of iron, he produced a spark

which ignited the explosive compound and the flash caught the straw piled against the log wall. Miser Morris stumbled back, choking and gasping, for the powder smoke entered his nostrils and set him to coughing. But his work was done. The weather-beaten logs, from the interstices of which hung ragged strips of bark, burned like tinder, and the growing flames raced along the foundation of the old barn, leaping higher and higher.

He hurried back to the house, chuckling and coughing alternately; he had made up his mind to the loss of his grain; he was delighted to think that the American army would not get any of it. But he feared Lafe Holdness and his troopers, and did not wish anybody to know that he had fired the barn.

The burning building stood some distance from any other structure on the farm; but the old man had neglected to take into consideration the velocity of the wind, and its direction. After returning to the farmhouse and barring his door again, he peered through the end window and saw the flames leaping higher and higher, and the column of smoke rising against the deep indigo of the sky, with considerable

satisfaction. But soon the barn roof caught and then the sparks began to fly.

The wind tore the burning thatch away and carried it whirling high into the air. The sky began to glow from the reflection of the conflagration, and flaming brands, carried on the breast of the gale, began dropping among the other buildings. Fortunately the dwelling house was not in the range of these, but the danger to his stock and newer barns filled the old man with sudden fear.

Out he rushed, forgetting his weakness and age, and with a heavy hickory broom which Hadley used to sweep up the litter in the stable, and which he found outside the stable door, he began to beat out the blazing brands which fell amid the straw in the barnyard. But at first he thought nothing of his nephew asleep on his couch in the stable loft. It was only his barns and cattle for which he was afraid.

The roar of the flames grew and a great canopy of smoke drifted over the Morris homestead. Out of this cloud the sparks dropped faster and faster, now on the roofs, now on the ground. The corner of the new barn caught and began to burn briskly. There was a

roughly-made ladder lying near, and this the old man sought to lift against the eaves so that he might reach this new fire.

But the strength acquired by the excitement now left him. The half-raised ladder fell to the snow. He could not lift it again. He was forced to see the conflagration on the new barn roof spread, and to see the corn crib next it likewise catch fire. His property, set burning by his own hand in an attempt to worst those whom he considered his enemies, was being destroyed before his very eyes, and he was helpless!

The neighbors were too far away to reach the scene of the fire in season to be of any use. Indeed, they might not know of it at all until morning. He was alone and must sit where he had fallen upon a rough log, and watch the flames lick up the property which he counted so precious. Alone—

And then he remembered Hadley for the first time. He started to his feet, trembling, wild-eyed, almost breathless. His nephew must still be in the stable-loft asleep! He tottered to the main door of the barn and beat feebly upon it. It was barred on the inside and the only way to enter was by a rear and smaller door. But his

strength would not allow of his reaching that entrance.

"Hadley! Hadley!" he groaned. "The boy will be burned alive! I shall have killed him —I am the cause of his death!" To his excited imagination his nephew's end was already accomplished.

But suddenly he was aware of the fact that several of the cattle were careering through the barnyard, heads down and tails in the air, bellowing with fright, running from the burning barn. How had they escaped from their stanchions? The next moment his own horses tore by and he heard the crack of a whip behind them. They were being driven away from the vicinity of the burning stable, for horses are proverbially foolish when caught by a fire, and seem only desirous of returning to their stalls for safety. Behind these came another horse, which was being led with a coat over its head. It was Black Molly, and Uncle Ephraim wellnigh dropped to the snow when he recognized the leader of the mare as Hadley.

Delivering a hearty slap upon the animal's flank and dragging his coat from her head, the boy sent her galloping after the other half-

crazed stock. Then he saw his uncle, and ran to him.

"The barn's bound to go, Uncle!" he exclaimed. "I've got all the stock out; the hogs went into the orchard. Black Molly ran back into her stall once and I had to go in again after her. The whole end of the barn is afire now. Why, sir, what is the matter?" for Uncle Ephraim had fairly fallen into his arms, and now hung about his neck.

"I—I thought you had not been awakened, Hadley!" gasped the farmer. Then he caught his breath and braced himself again. "Take me back to the house and—and let the buildings go. You can do nothing more." And leaning heavily on the shoulder of the wondering youth, Ephraim Morris turned his back upon his burning outbuildings and suffered Hadley to lead him in and lay him upon his high-post bed.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CANDLE BURNS OUT

HADLEY could do nothing further to save his uncle's property. The stock had all escaped in safety, for he had thought of the poor dumb beasts the moment he awoke in the stable loft and realized that the roof was ablaze; but there was no possible method of retarding the further progress of the flames. During the next two hours he watched the conflagration from the kitchen window, fearing that the wind would change its direction suddenly and shower the flying brands and sparks upon the house and the nearer outbildings. Uncle Ephraim lay on the bed in a partial stupor, utterly unnerved by the excitement.

Before dawn, so fiercely had the fire burned, the old barn was but a heap of smoking ashes and the new stable and corn crib a mass of glowing coals. None of the neighbors appeared un-

til after this, for the fire had not been observed during the night and the Morris homestead was at best in a lonely place. The column of smoke rising from the ruins, however, brought the curious flocking to the farmstead at a time when their presence was more than useless. These people Hadley was obliged to meet and keep out of the house, for Uncle Ephraim had just dropped into a troubled doze and the boy knew that he ought not to be disturbed. He begged the curious ones to go away because of the old man's illness, and some of them showed some appreciation of his position by catching the wandering stock for him and shutting them into one of the sheds which had been uninjured.

Hadley did the necessary chores under difficulties, having to run and look at his uncle every few moments, for he did not know how the old man might be when he awoke. Before this occurred Lafe Holdness and his assistants, with several wagons, appeared. Hadley got this caravan out of sight from the kitchen windows, and begged Holdness to allow the men to make no noise while they were loading the grain which he had worked so hard to save for

them. He felt vast relief when the teams had creaked away toward the river.

"You keep these vouchers yourself, Had," Holdness advised, before he rode off after the wagons. "By the look of things I sh'd say the old man wasn't long for this airth, an' the property 'll be yourn anyway purty soon. No use stirring him up by tellin' him he has overreached himself. Ye done nobly, lad, an' I'll see that somebody higher up 'n me knows it, too!"

There was no need for Hadley to be told that Uncle Ephraim was not long for this life. When he would lie abed and allow his nephew to do about as he pleased, there certainly was something serious the matter with him. In the afternoon Hadley saddled Black Molly and rode to the mills for the doctor. The physician came back with him and told Uncle Ephraim that he had "Just dropped in to make a friendly call, as he happened to be passing that way." But Uncle Ephraim received him with some sourness.

"There haint nothin' the matter with me, Dr. Birdsall," he growled. "I don't need none o' your jallop, nor your tonics. You can't do

me no good. I'm old—old! That's all that's the matter with me."

"You must eat more strengthening food and take a little of this tonic that I have brought you, Mr. Morris," the doctor said, soothingly, bringing a bottle forth from his skirt-tail pocket.

"My food's suited me all my life," declared Uncle Ephraim, with considerable vigor. "Poor folks can't afford many luxuries. And I never see any good in such stuff, anyway. You can take the tonic back with you, too, John Birdsall."

So the doctor departed, shaking his head, and left the old man's nephew to wait upon and nurse him as best he could. And it was no easy task. Not that Uncle Ephraim was as cross as usual, for he wasn't; but he seemed to dread being left alone for a moment, and Hadley could scarce find time to perform the necessary duties outside the house. He desired his nephew to talk to him all the time, too, and the boy related his adventures with the American troops over and over again during the next few days.

Once the old man said, curiously: "Your heart's so bound up in that Mr. Washington and

his rebellion, why did you come back here, Hadley ?"

"Oh, you see, there is nothing to be done while it is winter," the boy rèturned, evasively. "They are only drilling and getting ready to fight when it comes warm enough, and they get clothing and ammunition."

"Ha ! what do they know about drilling ?" snapped Uncle Ephraim. "Those ragamuffins !"

"They're learning a good deal. There has come over from Germany a very great drill-master—a baron he is, Baron von Steuben—and they tell me that he is doing wonders at Valley Forge, even with the raw recruits."

Again the old man said: "If you'd had your way, nephew, I s'pose all that grain I burned would have gone to Mr. Washington's army ?"

Hadley nodded, but did not speak. He felt conscience-smitten when he thought of how he had deceived the old man.

"I s'pose it would have meant much to them. —much to them," muttered Uncle Ephraim. "Ha ! well, they might have had it, I s'pose. The barns would have been saved then—and

you'd have been glad to give it to them, nephew ?"

" You can't imagine how much they need food, and provision for the beasts, Uncle," declared the boy. Then he told of the sentinel whom he saw the morning he escaped from Philadelphia, and of the sufferings of others in the camp which he had observed.

" Ha ! there must be something behind all this to make men fight so determinedly against their king," declared the old man.

He was silent a long time after this outburst ; but once he said, as though the question were forced from him, and he did not look at his nephew as he asked it : " If you had money, lad, I s'pose it would all go to these rebels—the farm and all ?"

" Not the farm, Uncle," Hadley said. " But I'd give my money if I had any. The farm could lie fallow till the war was ended. Then I'd make my living off it."

" Bah ! wasteful as usual, boy !" the other declared.

Yet Ephraim Morris's manner toward his nephew gradually changed. He cannot be said to have shown him affection ; yet perhaps

he went as far in that direction as his poor warped nature would allow. And he certainly did not wish the boy to be out of his sight a moment of his waking hours.

It was only a day or two after the doctor's visit that the old man suddenly had a great desire to examine his private papers. They were in a lacquered box, curiously inwrought with bits of mother-of-pearl—quite a fine specimen of the cabinetmaker's art—and the box was in the old Dutch oven in the chimney. Hadley climbed upon a stool, opened the oven, and reached the box out. There was nothing else in the cupboard. There were no more bags of coin like those which he had seen his uncle remove that night the fall before.

Uncle Ephraim opened the box with a key that he carried on a leather thong about his neck. Hadley did not go near him, but heard the papers rustle, and from the other end of the kitchen saw the old man unfold a long document and read it through. He could not fail to see that it had an illuminated heading and was, doubtless, a legal document. It was not hard to guess that the paper was the old man's will.

Mr. Morris hid this paper under his pillow and shut the box again before he called his nephew to him. "What did Dr. Birdsall say about me, nephew?" he asked, in a stronger voice than he had assumed for some days. Hadley was frightened, for he did not know whether it was best to tell him what the physician's opinion had been; yet he did not wish to tell a falsehood. He had sailed too near the wind in that matter already. "Speak up, boy, and tell me. I be'n't afraid to die, if so I must," concluded the old man; "but I want to know the truth."

"He said you were very weak, Uncle," declared the boy, at last. "If you would eat a little differently, and perhaps drink some of that strong tonic he left you—"

"And he'll be sending me in a bill for it at twice its value, I've no doubt!" snarled the miser. But then he was silent for a little, and finally said, more mildly: "There's no use putting false strength into a man. If my time has come, it's come, an' that's all there is to it." Then he suddenly drew the parchment-like document from beneath his pillow and shook it at the boy. "D'ye know what that is? It's my

will. I made it when you left me and went into the army."

"Yes, sir," said Hadley, but made no further comment. As he was turning away, however, the old man called him back. His eyes sparkled from underneath his shaggy brows, as he propounded this question: "Would you give my money to this Mr. Washington, if so be I left it to you?"

"I—I—no, sir!" blurted out Hadley.

"Well, what would you do with it, then?"

"I—I'd see if you really had that ten thousand pounds in trust for Colonel Knowles, and, if you did, I'd give it to him," said the boy, half fearing that the words would cause the old man much rage.

But in truth Uncle Ephraim's face paled and he looked away from his nephew, quickly. "So, that's how you'd waste my money, is it?" he muttered, and said nothing more aloud for a long time.

By and by, when it grew toward evening, Hadley had to attend to the horses and cattle, and was absent from the house for perhaps an hour. When he returned, he was startled to find Uncle Ephraim out of bed. He was

kneeling beside the couch, and, when the boy ran forward and touched him, he found that the old man was quite unconscious. He raised him hastily, and so wasted was his body that this exertion was but slight for the boy.

Had there been any nearby neighbors, Hadley would have run for assistance. But left to his own resources, he did what he could to bring the old man back to consciousness, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing Uncle Ephraim's eyes open again. "I—I'm all right," he gasped, but Hadley doubted the truth of that, very much. His uncle lay, picking at the comforter which covered him, his eyes wandering about the room for a little. Suddenly, he started up on his pillow and asked, with some excitement:

"Did I do it, Hadley?"

"It's all right, Uncle. Lie down again—everything is all right," said the boy; but he had no idea to what he referred. The old man lay down, however, as though relieved. Hadley saw his eyes close, and he stole away to put a new log on the fire. On the hearth was a little heap of ashes and charred paper. Uncle Ephraim had crept as far as the fireplace and had destroyed something while his nephew was

outside. It was the effort of doing this which had caused his fainting spell.

The old man could eat nothing, and finally he whispered to his nephew to come and sit beside him. His knotted fingers, wandering over the coverlet, found Hadley's hand and clutched it with almost a painful grip. His speech began to wander a little, and the boy, with difficulty, kept back his sobs, for he knew that a life was going out and that he would be alone in the presence of death before morning. Yet he could not leave his uncle now to bring any neighbor. The old man would not allow him even to get up from his chair beside the bed.

"So you would give my gold away, would you?" he once asked, with some harshness, raising his head and looking sternly at the boy. But then he dropped into a doze again, and after that showed no vindictiveness at all. Later he babbled enough, in a broken manner, to prove to the anxious listener that the story of the trust fund, as related to him by Mistress Lillian Knowles, was true. Once he squeezed his nephew's hand tighter, and whispered:

"You'll give it back to them, nephew? You surely will? Then I shall have peace."

"I'll make everything all right, Uncle," the boy declared, the tears coursing down his cheeks.

"That's a good lad—that's a good lad. I—wish—now—I'd—given—ye—that—grain," he muttered, and afterward relapsed into utter silence, his breath coming and going faintly.

There was an unsnuffed candle burning on the table, and Hadley, his hand still clasped by the old man, watched it for a long while. The flame grew longer, and the burned wick curled over and fell into the puddle of grease in the candlestick. The light flickered more and more as the taper grew shorter, and finally, with a last flash, and a puff of ill-smelling smoke, it went out.

Hadley rose hastily to pinch out the smouldering spark. But the fingers which gripped his hand held him back. They had become stiffened in their grasp, and were icy cold. While he, half asleep, had watched the flame, Uncle Ephraim's light had gone out.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BUSHWHACKERS AGAIN

When old Miser Morris, as they called him in scorn so many years, was really dead, the neighbors, as though conscious-stricken for their neglect of him and of his nephew during the last days of the farmer's existence, were eager to come in and help prepare the body for burial and—incidentally—to look over the house which had been so long shut up excepting in the L-part where the old man lived alone. But Hadley was old enough to govern affairs himself, and his uncle's death had aged him a good bit, for the time being at least. He was determined not to have these curious people over-run the old house, and he had his way.

Mistress Benson and Jonas were his best friends at this time. He had seen little of them during the time he had spent here at the

farmhouse, and he did not know how the innkeeper's wife felt toward him. But she put her prejudices to one side and played the part of the really kind-hearted woman that she was, when she heard of the boy's being left alone with the dead farmer. The funeral was a very quiet one, and Ephraim Morris was laid beside Hadley's mother in the little fenced-in enclosure in one corner of the farm which the old man had set aside himself as a burial lot.

"Now I shall go back to the camp at Valley Forge, Jonas, after I find somebody to take the stock here. I shall shut everything up until the war is over—"

"And the old man really left it all to you, Hadley?" exclaimed the innkeeper. "Well, that's decenter than I expected of him."

"He destroyed a will he had made—one, I think, which left the property in some other way. There are no other heirs that I know of, so it comes to me. But I shall do nothing with it, nor try to, until I get back from the army again. And this time I shall stay as long as I am of any use."

"And I'll look out for the stock, lad, and the place, too. Nothing shall be done with it until

you come back—I give you my word. You keep Black Molly, for she's a better riding horse than your uncle's work-horses."

And so Hadley determined to sleep one more night in the old house after the funeral. The snow was still deep on the ground and the earth itself was frozen. It would be foolish to dig for the buried gold which he was sure Uncle Ephraim had hidden in the orchard. Colonel Knowles would have to wait for his ten thousand pounds, if so be it was there under the old apple tree, until the frost was out of the ground.

Jonas had offered to send somebody to remain with Hadley that night, but the youth saw no reason for it. He had not been afraid to remain alone with the body of his uncle, why should he be fearful of an empty house now? He was not of a superstitious turn of mind; few people with really good digestion and clear consciences are. Such harm as Ephraim Morris had done was accomplished while he was alive; his end had been peaceful, and if he had done wrong and been tempted beyond his strength by the possession of the trust fund confided to him by his old employer, Hadley could not help feeling that his punishment in this life had been

greater even that any which might follow in a future existence.

Ephraim Morris, because he had been unfaithful to his trust, had become warped and mean as to his nature—had been disliked by his neighbors, shunned by everybody, and had spent a lonely, cheerless life. Thus our sins and wrong doings always bring in their train their own punishment, and whether such punishment is attributed to " natural " causes or not, the fact remains that the sinner has ample cause for repentance.

So Hadley went to bed that night in the high-post bed in the kitchen which the old man had occupied for so many years, without a tremor or suspicion of evil. Nevertheless evil came, though not through any supernatural agency. He had long been asleep when suddenly his dreams were disturbed by the howling of the old hound outside the door. He leaped up in bed. The sound was not repeated, and, believing the watchdog to be merely mourning (the beast had acted very much depressed since Uncle Ephraim's death), he lay down again.

Instantly there was a crash at the kitchen door. The butt of a heavy log had been flung

against it, and with sufficient force to tear hasp and chain away from the woodwork. The door flew open and there plunged into the room several figures, whose identity Hadley Morris suspected before they reached the bed. Two of these nocturnal visitors flung themselves upon him as he lay in the bed, and he recognized one as Lon Alwood. Several others followed the first group into the house, and the captive saw that Brace Alwood was their leader. Evidently he had brought the same troop of bushwhackers with him which, once before, he had led against the Morris homestead.

Hadley was bound around with strong ropes and then laid back upon the bed like a chicken ready for the spit. Then Brace came over to him and examined the cords to see that they were perfectly secure. The elder Alwood was a black-browed, savage looking man with a scarred face and eyes which narrowed cruelly as he contemplated the prisoner.

"Seein's the old man has died before we got here, I reckon we'll have to do our business with you, young sir," he said. "You played the spy and kept us from being successful when we made the miser a visit before. I'd have toasted

his feet over the fire but I'd got at his hoard of gold that time, if it hadn't been for you—you little rat!" He could not keep his hands off the helpless lad, but pinched his arm cruelly. "Now you'll tell us where the money's hid—you've not had time to get it away since the old rascal died, so don't say that!"

"Such money as I have is in the pockets of my clothing yonder," Hadley declared, firmly.

Lon had already been through those, and now came to the bedside and showed his brother three or four gold pieces. At the sight of these the elder Alwood's eyes sparkled. "Ha!" he cried. "Where these jolly-boys came from there must be a-plenty. Now, young sir, speak up and tell us the hiding place of the old miser's wealth," and he struck Hadley a stinging blow on the side of his face.

The eyes of the helpless youth blazed. "You contemptible coward!" he exclaimed, "You strike me because I am helpless. Let me up and give me a fair chance for myself and I warrant I'd give you as good as you'd return!"

But another heavy blow from his cruel captor halted these useless threats, and brought the

blood to his cut lips. "Stop all such talk as that and tell me where the money is hid," commanded Brace Alwood, while Lon stood anxiously by, his freckled face a-grin.

"As far as I know there is no more money in the house," Hadley said, honestly.

"Don't tell that to me!" cried Brace, raising his hand again.

"I am telling you the truth. "Uncle Ephraim died without telling me where he had hidden his money. The few gold-pieces that were in the box with his private papers I took. Some I spent to pay the funeral debts. The others Lon holds in his hand."

The heavy hand of the bully descended again, and with a harsh, "'Tis not so, boy!" Brace turned away to speak with his crew. Lon remained to gloat over his enemy.

"You got the best of me in Philadelphia, and got me discharged from Colonel Knowles' place," he snarled. "But I'll get square now, Had Morris! And I know there's plenty of money here somewhere. Miser Morris had a lot that belonged to Colonel Knowles, and wouldn't give it up to him, too. You can't tell me. I heard it talked about while I was there.

Even that servant, William, knows about it. And Brace and me are going to get that money —don't you fear!"

"I wish you luck," muttered Hadley, defiantly.

Lon's reply was a blow, too; he had his enemy at his mercy now and he was just the sort of a person to play the part of a tyrant. Suddenly Brace returned to the bedside. "Where is that box you speak of?" he demanded. "The box where Miser Morris kept his papers?"

Hadley told him and one of the men climbed up and drew the box from the oven. They broke it open and Brace and his brother looked hastily through the documents therein. On one sheet of parchment was a lot of figuring in the old man's crabbed hand. These figures seemed to interest the Alwoods mightily. Hadley heard Lon whisper to his brother: "That accounts for more than twelve thousand pounds. D'ye think he really had so much, Brace?"

"No knowin' how much belonged to Colonel Knowles—a plague on him! The old man was a thief as well as a miser. Twelve thousand pounds!" He uttered the words lingeringly

and his eyes glowed again. He stepped back to the bed once more.

"We'll not play with you, young sir!" he exclaimed, bending down so that Hadley could see his wicked face plainly in the candle-light. "Miser Morris had gold—gold—purses full of it! And we shall carry it away with us when we go back to the river to-night. We shall not fail this time. You shall tell us where it is concealed."

"I tell you on my honor that Uncle Ephraim did not confide in me," declared Hadley through his stiffening lips. "If he had gold he told me nothing of it."

"I don't believe you!" exclaimed the bully, and his huge fist was poised over the face of the helpless boy. Lon grabbed his brother's hairy wrist.

"Have a care, Brace!" he cried, warningly. "If you strike him and stun him, he can tell us nothing."

"Right!" returned the other. "We'll not stun him. Nay, we'll let him know he is very much alive, indeed. Here, you rascals! bear a hand here."

Two of the party of eight or ten who had

come into the kitchen, came forward. They had heaped wood upon the fire and the room was warm and comfortable now, for the door had been shut. At Brace Alwood's command the men lifted Hadley and bore him to the hearth.

"Now," said the leader, scowling blackly upon him, "you shall tell us where the miser's gold is hidden or you'll roast! Hold his feet out there to the blaze, Stephen. Let him have a taste of it, an' he'll speak the quicker."

Two or three of the fellows murmured at the inhuman treatment, but Brace silenced them instantly. "Ye are all alike in this," he declared. "We'll all share, and you'll take your part of the gold as quick as the next—I know ye! So be still!" Then he turned once more to the thoroughly frightened prisoner. "Now, out with it, Hadley Morris! Tell what you know, or your feet shall wither in that fire!"

"I tell you he revealed nothing to me," gasped the youth.

"Nay—it will not do!" cried Brace. "I mean all I say. If you don't want to travel through life a cripple, tell me where the money is. It may not be in the house; I don't care

where it has been put—I'll get it! D'ye hear me?"

His vexation at the boy's obstinacy was so great that he could scarce keep his hands off him. He seized a blazing brand from the hearth suddenly and held the flame against the bare flesh of Hadley's ankle. The sudden pain brought a scream of agony from the tortured boy's lips and he writhed in the arms of the men who held him.

"Tell me where it is!" commanded Brace, leaning over him and glaring like a wolf at its prey. "I'll roast your feet till the flesh drops from the bones if you don't! Mind that, now."

The pain of the burn was great, and in spite of his every effort the tears coursed down the cheeks of the prisoner. The thought of the horrible torture in store for him almost made him faint; yet he would not tell what he knew about old Ephraim Morris's hidden hoard. Had the gold been his uncle's in fee simple, and therefore by course of nature his own, he might have told at once. Wealth looked very small to Hadley Morris at that moment, as compared with safety. The thought of being crippled by

this barbarous method was awful—unbearable. Yet if he told of his uncle's hiding place in the orchard he would be sacrificing the ten thousand pounds which Uncle Ephraim had feloniously kept from Colonel Knowles for so long; he could never repay Lillian's kindness by giving her father the sum which rightfully belonged to him. Besides, to betray the secret seemed dishonorable when some person other than himself would be the most injured.

"Speak up, there!" growled Brace, looking for another brand.

"Tell, lad!" begged one of those who held him. Brutal as these men were, the suffering which they knew would be visited upon the youth horrified them. "Ye'll only have to tell in the end, and then—well, 'twill do you no manner o' good to go on crutches for the rest of thy days."

Brace scowled at the fellow but waited a moment longer. Suddenly, as though beside himself at the boy's obstinacy, he seized his extremities and thrust them toward the scorching flames. But before the blaze could lick the boy's flesh there came a deafening report in the room; the whole party were half blinded by

the flash which accompanied it, and Brace Alwood plunged forward upon the hearth. He lay without moving, while, for a few seconds, the astounded bushwhackers neither moved nor spoke.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MISER'S GOLD

THOSE few seconds of horrified inaction marked the Tories' undoing, for, expecting no enemies, they had left their steeds tied in the rear of the house, without either guard or sentinel. Riding by cross-road and byway to the river, where arrangements had been made with Farmer Alwood to have Black Sam in readiness to ferry them over the stream, Brace had expected to acquire the miser's treasure and escape again to the British lines without being molested by the American light-horse then scouring the territory. But the plot miscarried.

Ere the astounded men could seize their guns which had been stacked in a corner of the big kitchen, the window through which the single shot had been fired, and the doorway as well, were bristling with weapons. Hadley, half-fainting from the reaction, had been dropped by

the two men who were obeying Brace Alwood's cruel mandate; but a well-remembered voice rang out, arousing both the prisoner and the remaining Tories. "Surrender, ye scoundrels, or ye'll all foller yon black-hearted villain! Not a glance toward your weapons there. We've more guns p'intin' at ye than are stacked in that corner."

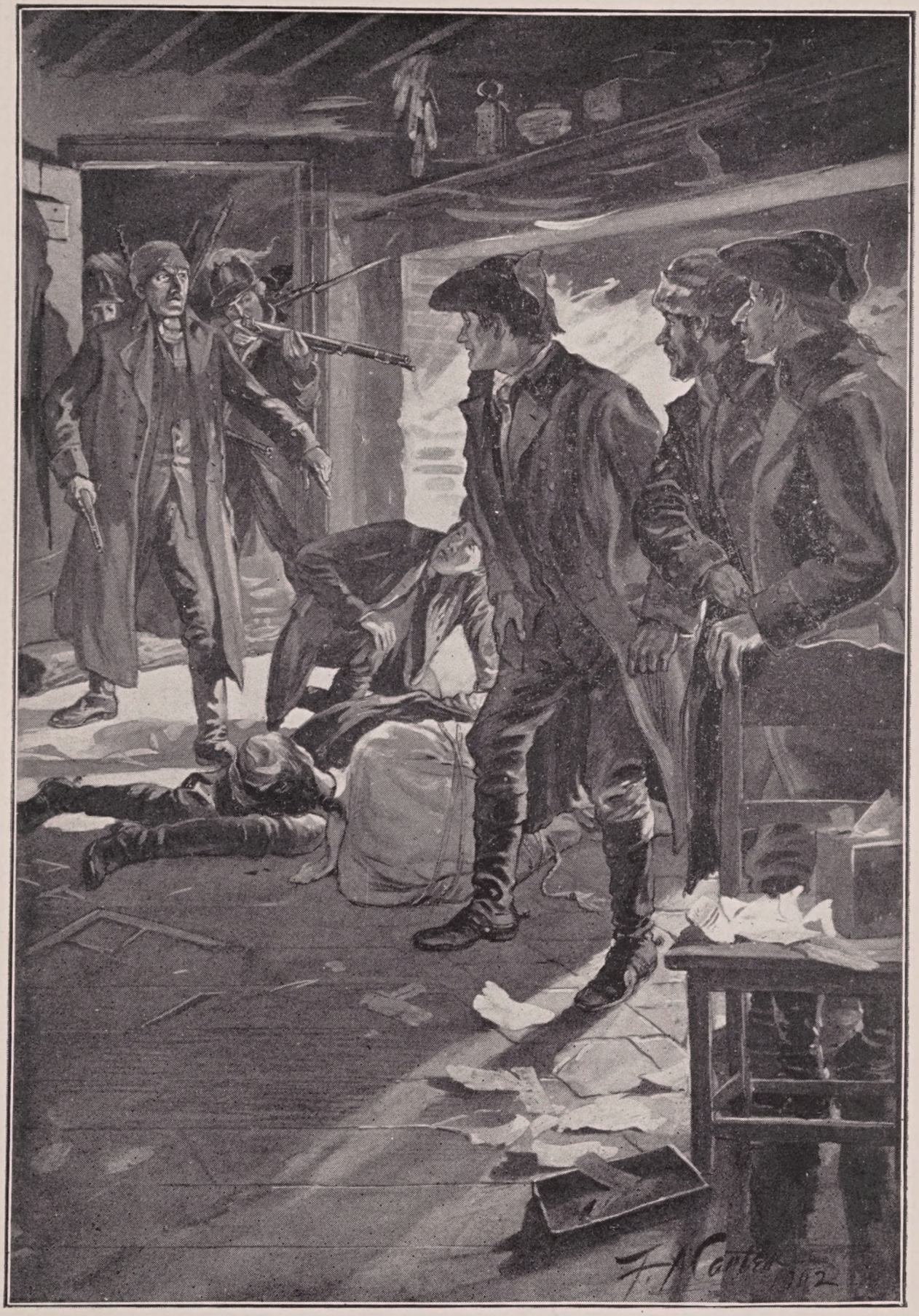
The Tories were in no mood to doubt the statement, or to make a dash for liberty. When Lafe Holdness strode into the room they were as meek as lambs and allowed him to remove their side-arms. Lon was sobbing over his brother, and for the moment the Yankee paid no attention to him, but instead quickly severed Hadley's bonds and lifted him to his feet. "Jefers-pelters!" exclaimed the scout, "that was a leetle the nearest call yeou'll ever have ter gittin' toasted, I reckon. That's a bad burn on your laig, Had. Lemme put some of my salve on it," and out came the old man's never-failing pouch, and the burn was dressed in a masterly manner before he allowed the boy to put on his clothing.

While Hadley was dressing in the far corner of the room, Lafe sat on the bed and related

the incidents which led to the sudden and unexpected rescue of his young friend. "Mebbe these niggers have got black hides," he observed, "but some of 'em own white souls jest the same! And that Black Sam's one. 'Taint the first time he's done somethin' for us—'member haow he helped yeou 'cross the river the night yeou carried them dispatches to His Excellency? Wal, he heered talk last night of this raid, though I reckon old man Alwood didn't know 'zactly what Brace was up to in coming over this side o' the river. But Sam got the news ter me—never mind haow. I'd stopped 'em at the ferry, but we was a leetle too late. Then I reckoned they was bound for here, l'arnin' that old Miser Morris was dead. I didn't know whether you' left or not. But you're goin' back to the Forge, I s'pose, Had?"

"Not at once," Hadley said, slowly. "I have a duty to perform first, I believe. And after this raid I shall never feel easy in my mind until it is done. But I won't forget that you saved me this time, old friend. I don't know how to thank you," and he got Holdness' hand and squeezed it gratefully.

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed the scout, carelessly.



"SURRENDER, YE SCOUNDRELS!"

"It's all in a day's work. I happened to be scouring the country for more fodder. But I go into Philadelphia to-morrow or next day."

"Do you dare?" gasped Hadley.

The old man laughed. "I still am a plain teamster and am useful to the British yonder," he said.

Hadley forgot the pain of his burn and seized the Yankee's sleeve. "Take me in with you again, Lafe."

"What for, lad? It might not be so easy for yeou ter git through the lines."

"I'll tell you later, Lafe," said the boy, dropping back on the bed himself now. "The corporal wants you."

The question was as to what should be done with the Tories. The discussion did not last long. Lafe was not in command of the file of American troopers anyway, but he knew what to advise. The prisoners were placed upon their horses, their hands tied behind them and ankles strapped beneath the bodies of the steeds, and like a herd of sheep they were driven down the road toward the ferry, from which point it would be a small matter to get them around Germantown and to the Valley Forge camp.

The chief of the band of bushwhackers was allowed to be removed by his sorrowing father, and because of Hadley's pleading, Lon was allowed to go free.

"'Tis true he's only a boy," grumbled Holdness; "but he' a treacherous little hound and has tried his best to do you harm, Had."

"I know it. And I'm sure I don't feel any too kindly toward him. But he's the only child left over there at Alwood's now, and perhaps he'll stay at home after seeing his brother's terrible end."

"He deserves hanging," grumbled the scout.

And for the very reason that he did not know how severe the punishment meted out to the Tories would be, Hadley held firm until he got Lon free. Hanging seemed too terrible an end for his one-time school companion; but Lon hadn't the grace to thank him for his release.

But Hadley had another and a more serious matter to think of, and after this raid upon the Morris place he was sure that he could not rest in contentment until he had attended to it. This was the disposal of the money which he believed his uncle had hidden in the orchard the

night before Colonel Creston Knowles' visit to the farmhouse. This treasure was, he believed, the bulk of, if not all, the ten thousand pounds which had been placed in Miser Morris's hands by the old merchant of Liverpool—the trust fund which, under certain conditions, was to be given over to Colonel Knowles. He wished to dig up this treasure and take it to Philadelphia, and when the light-horse and their prisoners had gone Hadley explained this to Lafe Holdness, craving his assistance in getting the gold safely into the beleaguered city and into the British officer's hands.

"Not that any Britisher is desarvin' of it," declared Lafe, gloomily; "but I don't s'pose you'd feel right in your own mind to keep the gold for yourself."

"Neither would you!" exclaimed Hadley.

"Wal, no," admitted Lafe, and they were out in the orchard before sunrise to find Miser Morris's hidden hoard. Hadley had well observed the place where Uncle Ephraim buried the gold, and an hour's work brought to light the top stone of a cairn that had evidently been the receptacle for the old man's wealth for some time before his nephew happened to see him at the

"midnight burying." The bags of coin Hadley had seen concealed were in the goodly company of several others. And all were of English gold and Spanish doubloons excepting one. This was filled with the silver "pine tree shillings" minted in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Hadley and his companion counted all this wealth, and it occupied several hours to do it. The sum which Colonel Knowles claimed had been left him in trust by his father was there; but over and above the ten thousand pounds (which was, indeed, a fortune in that day), there was nearly fifteen hundred pounds which, undoubtedly, had been earned by the investment of some of the trust fund before the war had broken out, and frightened Uncle Ephraim into withdrawing his investments and hiding his gold.

"You'll be a rich man after you give back the Colonel what's belongin' to him," declared Lafe Holdness. "You'll do well with this money and the farm, lad."

But Hadley was in doubt, and against Holdness' advice, he took all the bags of coin with him when they set out the next morning for Philadelphia.

Though the British might have begun to suspect Lafe Holdness, the pass which he obtained for Hadley conducted them both safely into the city. Holdness put up his team, as usual, at the Indian Queen, but the bags of coin they removed for safety to Friend Jothan Pye's shop, where Hadley received an abundant welcome from the Quaker and his wife. He learned, too, that the Knowleses were still residing in the house in which he had had his interview with Lillian, and he engaged a carriage that very evening to take the gold to the British Colonel's dwelling. Holdness went along to guard the money, and remained in the carriage with it while Hadley entered the house.

Dinner was just over, and when William, the silent serving man, ushered him into the drawing-room, where Lillian had entertained him that memorable afternoon, both the girl and her father were present. The former recognized him instantly, and sprang up with a cry of welcome which sounded good in Hadley's ears. "Hadley Morris! Why do you risk coming back to Philadelphia?" But the Colonel gazed upon the rather conscious youth quizzically.

"Have you come to tell me that the rebel army has captured the city since noon and that I am your prisoner, Master Morris?" he asked.

"Not yet, sir," returned Hadley, bravely, while he accepted Lillian's hand most gladly. "But the revolutionary army may be demanding your surrender ere long."

"Aye, that is so," returned the Colonel, gravely, and he was kind enough to rise and offer his own hand to the visitor. "How often have I told better men and those higher in the confidence of His Lordship than I, that we were dooming ourselves to much trouble and possible defeat by lying inactive for these long months. And now France has taken up the cause of your Mr. Washington. Ah, Hadley, the war has outgrown, or soon will outgrow, the name of 'rebellion'; we shall ere long be forced to call it 'revolution,' as you declare. Yet there can be but one end, manifestly. This Mr. Washington and his supporters must be crushed and the British arms shall do it, when once our leaders awake from their trance and learn that men with so much determination and ability can not be beaten by fiddling, roistering soldiery."

"Colonel Knowles," returned his young

visitor, speaking seriously likewise, "I fear that your belief in the ultimate success of the British arms will not be verified. I have seen this winter that which gives me confidence—unshakable confidence—in American liberty. Men who have suffered what our troops have suffered in Valley Forge will never give up this struggle until the colonies are free of all control of England. But you and I cannot agree in this matter," he hastened to add, as he saw the Colonel's lowering brow, "and I have not come here to discuss it with you. Nor did I come to call upon Mistress Lillian," and he bowed to the young girl as he spoke. "But I once told her that if it was ever in my power to right a great wrong done you by Ephraim Morris, I should do it. And I am here for that purpose."

"Do you mean—" began the astonished officer."

"Oh, Hadley! has he given you the money?"

"Ha!" exclaimed her father, severely, "Ephraim Morris would never give up that ten thousand pounds in this world—unless he was made to."

Hadley flushed redly and hesitated. Somehow it hurt him, after what had passed at Uncle

Ephraim's death, to hear the old man spoken of so harshly. And yet he knew that his uncle would never be understood. Only he could ever believe that, in his last moments, the man who had been called a miser, had intended to restore the ten thousand pounds, and felt remorse for his wrong-doing.

"My uncle is dead," he said, gravely. "Before he died he destroyed his will, in which he had, I believe, cut me off with little or nothing, and so I am his only heir. I found no direct account of the ten thousand pounds which your daughter declared was given to Uncle Ephraim in trust for you." The British officer started, and his face paled; but his visitor continued: "Nevertheless, from what my uncle let drop before he died, I believe he did have such a sum belonging to you, and that in his last moments he wished it restored. I found the sum in question, and fifteen hundred odd pounds more, buried in a secret place in the orchard. Doubtless the fifteen hundred pounds had been gained by my uncle from investments made with the trust fund. So," ended Hadley, simply, "I have brought it all with me, and if you will send your man out to the carriage which waits at

the door, my friend, Master Holdness, will help him bring the bags in."

For a minute the Colonel and his daughter looked at their visitor in speechless amazement. Then Lillian's first act covered Hadley with confusion and pretty nearly drove his self-possession to the four winds. She got up, walked to his chair, and warmly grasping his hands, thanked him again and again. Then she burst into tears and kissed her father, and Hadley began to realize that the recovery of this fortune meant more to the reticent English officer and his daughter than he had ever imagined.

It was some moments before the Colonel could speak. Then the manner in which he wrung Hadley's hand told more than his broken words of the pent-up feeling within him. William was sent hastily to help Holdness with the bags of coin, which were brought into the drawing room and dumped in a pile upon the centre table.

"Jefers-pelters!" exclaimed the Yankee, wiping his brow when the last bag was set down. "I ain't never come so near bein' wealthy in my life b'fore. Tell ye what it is,

Colonel, that there Had Morris is three parts foolish for givin' up so much money 'thout a fight for it. But ye can't talk to him; he will have his own way. Allus was the head-strungest boy ever I see." Then he winked at his young friend. "I'm goin' back with the kerridge, Had. I reckon you'll wanter stay a while longer an' get your resate for that gold," and he backed out of the room.

And although Hadley would have been glad to get away in a hurry, rather than listen to any further thanks, he was not allowed to do so. Besides, Colonel Knowles would not hear of accepting anything but the ten thousand pounds which had been originally left him by his father, the Liverpool merchant, and when Hadley finally left, insisted on William going with him to Friend Pye's and helping him carry the surplus bags of coin.

Hadley was treated to another surprise on the way to the Quaker's residence. The Cockney, William, broke silence of his own accord. "Hi say, Master Morris," he remarked, "Hif Hi should take it into me 'ead to come into your camp some day could Hi call for you to say a word for me?"

"How do you mean?" demanded Hadley.

"W'y, sir, Hi've been watchin' this 'ere war since Hi came to the country with Colonel Knowles, hand hit's my 'pinion as 'ow these 'ere Colonists his right. Hi'm thinkin' some o' j'inin' them meself."

And sure enough, before that eighteenth day of June, when George Roberts galloped out of Philadelphia and over the Gulph road with the exciting news that the British were on the move, William had shouldered a musket in Hadley's own company of Pennsylvania troops. But it was years afterward—not until the Revolution was over and Colonel Knowles had bought land and settled in York State himself—that he learned through Hadley what had become of his servant when that individual escaped by night from Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XXVII

WHEN A REBELLION BECOMES A REVOLUTION

Hadley Morris, however, returned to the camp at Valley Forge in season to observe and participate in the great changes for the better which laid hold upon the army after Baron Steuben, as Major-General and Inspector, instituted proper drill and discipline among the "ragged regulars." Hadley, having shut up the old Morris house before visiting Colonel Knowles and Lillian in Philadelphia, had no intention of going back there until the war was over. Fortunately, when he entered the camp of the American troops, he found his benefactor, Colonel John Cadwalader, present, and to him he explained that, now his uncle had passed away, there was no further bar to his enlistment.

Colonel Cadwalader had returned at Washington's request to take command of a part of

the Pennsylvania troops, for more and more was it becoming apparent that the Irish-Frenchman, Conway, was stirring up trouble for the Commander-in-chief. Conway's continued statements in regard to Washington's inability so aroused the latter's personal friends, as well as the rank and file of the army, that certain supporters of the "Conway cabal," as it was later called, notably Samuel Adams, dared not show themselves at Valley Forge at all. Lee, but lately exchanged for the British General Prescott, was also back in camp, aiding and abetting in every calumny or slander aimed at His Excellency. Better had it been for the American cause had that ambitious and traitorous man remained in a British prison, and only by a trick of fortune did he escape sharing Conway's fate. The latter was "called out" by Colonel Cadwalader, for in those days a duel was considered a perfectly legitimate way in which to settle a dispute, or prove or disprove a statement.

So, with the friendship and influence of Colonel Cadwalader behind him, Hadley Morris, though but a boy, obtained a lieutenant's commission and was billeted to the regiment of his

old friend Prentice, now Major Prentice. He continued to act as aide to General Wayne, however, and upon Black Molly was a prominent figure about the camp during the last weeks of the occupation of Valley Forge.

Nor was it so strange at that time that a mere boy should be an officer in the American army. There were many boys at Valley Forge that spring of '78 whose names were destined to be enrolled upon America's record of honor. There was that boy of less than twenty, called James Monroe, who was there then to prophesy that one day his "doctrine" should keep America unpolluted from the grasp of European politics. There were two other youths there—still mere boys—whose names were destined to be linked sorrowfully together in later life—Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. General Lafayette himself was scarcely of age, and the future Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall, bore a musket in the Third Virginia, and suffered with the patience of a high-minded youth at Valley Forge.

Hadley found that as a regular officer he had not the freedom he had once enjoyed, but he was interested in his men and eager to learn

himself. He found at once that there was ample opportunity to learn, if so be he was inclined, for there was a master mind in the art of war in the camp. Baron Steuben, next to Washington himself, was the hardest working man at Valley Forge. As Major General and Inspector of the army, he had instituted a discipline unknown before among the "ragged regulars."

Beginning with a picked company of a hundred and twenty men, many of them young officers who volunteered for the service, the Baron drilled them on foot himself, musket in hand. These, when they became proficient, he made models for others, and when Hadley came back, after his uncle's death, the whole camp was like a military school.

A skillful soldier, a thorough disciplinarian, a gentleman of polished manners, Baron Steuben possessed the ability and self-effacement needed to make him a power in this work. No private in the ranks lived more abstemiously than himself. Rising at three in the morning, he smoked his long Dutch pipe, while his servant dressed his hair. Then fortified by a cup of coffee he was on horseback at sunrise, and gal-

loped to the parade. There all day he drilled the men. The privates themselves might tire, and company after company be brought up to be put through their evolutions, but the Baron never showed fatigue. At nightfall he returned to the hut in which he made his quarters, and worked far into the night over regulations, instructions to the inspectors under him, and upon the multitude of clerical duties which fell to his office.

It was to Baron Steuben that Monmouth was due, for when the Americans marched out of the Valley Forge camp, they were an efficient, well-disciplined army, whereas they had been a straggling band of liberty-loving yet disheartened and ill-governed men when they marched over the old Gulph road through the falling snow of that December day, seven months before.

Valley Forge was truly the turning point of the struggle of the colonies against the mother country. While the troops suffered and drilled in that wilderness, the alliance with France was being formed, and the uplift which this gave the battling and newly-born nation cannot be over-estimated. The surety of the treaty with

France encouraged Congress to reject the overtures of the British parliament in April, and on May 4th news of the settling of the French alliance reached that patient, quiet, never-resting Man in the little stone house under the hill on the bank of Valley creek—that man whose belief in the righteousness of the Cause of Liberty and in the incontrovertible fact that, in the end, right will prevail, had held together a mob of yeomen through a time that would have tested the patriotism of the Greeks themselves to the utmost.

That spring at Valley Forge was a time of much bustle and preparation. With General Greene made quartermaster by Congress, the army was finally being well and regularly fed, and clothed as well. All the long winter the British had allowed the Americans to remain in their camp undisturbed. One well-planned blow at Valley Forge might have set forward the final declaration of American freedom a quarter of a century. But Howe preferred to lie idle and let his men and officers carouse and be fêted by those Tories who trusted in a red coat rather than a loyal heart beating under a ragged buff jacket.

When the British finally awoke to their position in the beleaguered city, the time for striking that fatal blow had passed. Recruits were flocking to Valley Forge, and the Americans were rapidly preparing for some decisive blow. The foreign army dared not await the onslaught, and, after sending three thousand Tories to New York by water (the traitors dared not remain in Philadelphia after the redcoats went) the British, encumbered by twelve miles of baggage wagons, commenced a slow retreat across Jersey to the more easily held New York City.

The evacuation had been expected, and the first news of the movement set every battalion in motion in the American camp. Brigade after brigade left the quarters in which they had starved and frozen during the long, terrible winter, and marched over the pontoon bridges flung across the Schuylkill, and, less troubled by baggage, gained upon the enemy. It was then that General Lee showed his treacherous intentions, and, being next in command to Washington himself, did all in his power to throw obstacles in the way of the patriot army and discourage a battle. Yet His Excellency knew

that the patriots had everything to gain, while Clinton had everything to lose, in joining issues. Therefore, against Lee's insistent advice, Washington was determined to attack the British before they could reach the safety of New York.

The two armies were marching parallel, but several miles apart, the Americans gradually forging ahead. Seeing this, Clinton turned east, following the road which led through Monmouth and Middletown to Sandy Hook. Washington at once detached five thousand troops from his rear guard to attack the rear of the British, intending to cut the latter off from the Hessians, who led the advance of the enemy. It was Lee's right to command this attacking force, and with him was Lafayette and Wayne.

When the plan became known on that Saturday afternoon, the eager soldiery as well as their officers were delighted at the prospect. All winter they had lain at Valley Forge without being able to strike a blow at the enemy. They felt the confidence of well-drilled men, and looked forward cheerfully to a trial of their strength against the grenadiers and Hessians.

Hadley, as Wayne's dispatch-bearer, was busy indeed carrying messages back and forth between the generals. Wayne and Lafayette worked excellently together, for both were anxious for the fray. Lee sulked, objected to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, openly declared that his men were no match for the British, and finally refused to lead the attack.

There can be little doubt but that his refusal was gladly accepted by Washington, who already doubted Lee's loyalty. The young French Marquis was appointed to command in the Virginian's stead, and the prospect for the battle on the morrow looked bright, indeed. But Lee changed his mind over-night, having meantime, without much doubt, consulted by letter with the British commander, with whom he had been coquetting all along, and on Sunday morning agreed to lead the American attack after all. His re-decision was well-nigh fatal to the American arms.

Sunday morning, June 28th, was exceedingly hot, the thermometer standing at 96 degrees in the shade. The night before Cornwallis, with about eight thousand British, lay at Monmouth Court-house, while an equal number of Hessians

were encamped not far away. The Americans fell upon the rear guard very early, General Wayne commanding the centre of attack, while Lafayette led one wing and Lee the other. Hadley Morris, therefore, had plenty of opportunity for active service during the bitter struggle. Yet he would have been better contented had he been assigned to his own company, and marched with those grim-faced men whose muskets flashed back the brilliant sunshine as they deployed through the ravine which gave into the Monmouth road.

The attack had already begun in front, when Prentice, with the regiment at a quick trot, went by him. "You'll be shot first up there on that horse, Had!" cried the Major, with a laugh. Prentice always laughed when there seemed any chance of a scrimmage. "And that's all the good it will do me," thought the boy, in some distaste. Yet he could not rejoin his men when Anthony Wayne commanded him to remain where he was. He was on a height, and could see quite plainly the first clash of arms as the two armies came together.

The British were so strung along the road that it seemed quite impossible for them to meet

the five thousand Americans with any real success. They began to give back at once. Yet it was only Wayne's division that was really fighting in earnest. Lafayette had not been able to reach the enemy as quickly as the impetuous Quaker, while Lee was holding his men back most unaccountably. Suddenly an aide dashed up from Lee ordering Wayne to fall back.

The command appalled Wayne; he could not believe the message had been delivered aright. It was a moment for charging the almost demoralized British, not for giving way before them. Not until a second message from Lee arrived did he slowly withdraw his men. Lee's wing was already in disorder. The battle which had at first seemed surely in the Americans' favor, now promised to be a bad defeat. But "Mad Anthony" Wayne was not alone in his suspicions of Lee's treachery. Lafayette, too, saw the beginning of the disorderly rout. Wayne had sent Hadley Morris to repeat Lee's order to the Frenchman. The latter fairly wrung his hands in despair.

"It is fatal! It is fatal!" he cried. Then he turned to his staff with blazing eyes. "The

day must be saved, monsieurs. His Excellency must be informed. He alone can control this revolt. I will send to him—"

His eye fell upon the young dispatch-bearer. "You, monsieur, must find General Washington. Do you understand?"

Hadley saluted, and drew the mare's rein tighter.

"It is well. Ride furiously, monsieur. Tell him from me that his presence upon the field is sorely needed. Away!"

Obeying the pressure of her master's hand, Black Molly darted away from the group of anxious officers. Already the wounded, and those faint-hearts who ever grasp the first opportunity for escape from the scene of a real battle, were streaming along the road and through the fields to the rear. Naturally Wayne's men retreated more orderly than did those under Lee's direct command; but a rout is infectious. With broken columns streaming through the fighting lines, the entire attacking force might break and retreat madly at any time.

Young as he was, and with but a brief experience, Hadley well understood this. He saw

the danger, and, in common with Lafayette and his advisers, the young courier knew that there was just one person who could yet bring victory out of imminent defeat. With all his impetuosity Wayne could not do this, nor could the brave and chivalrous Marquis; they did not possess the power to counter Lee's orders. But the Commander-in-Chief himself could stay the tide and perhaps turn the battle.

The heat was terrible; men, both wounded and those who helped them, were dropping on the roadside. In spite of this, however, Hadley tore along the way, urging Black Molly to her best paces as she had seldom been urged before. Even when Colonel Knowles and the dragoons chased him on the Ferry road months before he had not ridden faster. Choked by dust, gasping for breath, his hat off and his unbound hair flying in the wind which the mare's speed made, he leaned forward in the saddle reckless of his own danger or his steed's well-being. He reached a cross-road. A cry to a watchful picket gave him the right direction, and on and on he rode until finally he beheld the uniforms of the Life Guard right ahead.

And there upon a little hill he saw a group

of horsemen. There was one on a dapple gray steed—a commanding figure which he knew well even at that distance. He stopped not for a password or explanation. He nigh overrode an officious sentinel and charged the slope of the gentle hill as though storming a vantage point of the enemy. The rattle of musketry behind him was still vigorous, but there was an irregularity about the discharges which had already troubled the watchful commander.

"You are from the field!" said Washington, quickly, as Hadley drew in his mare. "What of General Lee, sirrah?" Then he recognized the flushed and perspiring face of the young aide. "Ha! 'tis Lieutenant Morris. What of General Wayne, then, sir?"

"I come from General Lafayette, Your Excellency," stammered the boy. "He fears—"

"Fears what, sirrah?" was the impatient query. "Is not all right? Is Lee—"

"The army is retreating, sir. It is General Lee's command."

"What, sir!" and the Commander-in-Chief's voice suddenly became harsh and his eyes gleamed. "What is this you tell us?"

"General Lafayette bade me tell you that

your presence on the field is sorely needed," cried Hadley. "A retreat all along the line has been ordered."

For a moment Washington looked as though one of those rare outbursts of passion before which his subordinates trembled when they did come, was imminent. Then suddenly, without an order to his staff, he plunged spurs into his mount's sides, and dashed off toward the scene of the raging battle. Several aides followed, and Hadley, without halting to breathe his steed, joined their train. Black Molly had run nobly, but she was well-nigh spent and he could not keep up with the others. But he arrived in time to see one of the most wonderful exhibitions of military skill in the history of human warfare.

The instant the gray horse and his commanding rider appeared, the breaking ranks of the patriot army halted. A faint cheer went up, which extended further and further along the serried lines. Those who had been giving way before the exultant grenadiers halted; the men who had already begun to flee came back with renewed courage to assist their comrades. Waving his sword as he rode, Washington plunged

through the broken lines and met Lee face to face.

"What is the meaning of all this?" was his demand, his suppressed passion almost choking his speech. And then, without listening to his subordinate's craven reply, he turned to his beloved troops and by the magic of his presence brought order out of chaos. Now did Baron Steuben's training plainly show upon the erstwhile raw yeomanry. They rallied to the standards. The officers led them back upon the enemy's lines. Before the day was over the battle of Monmouth could be safely ranked as an American victory, although it had not the effect it might have had was Lee an honest man. The British escaped from the field by leaving their wounded and killed in the hands of the Americans; they might, however, have been totally overwhelmed. But such was the moral effect of the battle that more than two thousand Hessians deserted from the retreating army before it reached New York City.

Late in the day, when the field had been rewon and the enemy put to flight, a group of officers rode slowly through a ravine leading up from the Monmouth road to the heights above.

At one point they came upon a black horse lying upon its side in the gravel. A figure bent over it, with his arms around the creature's neck, and so engaged was this person, that the officers rode almost over the two ere they were observed. Leaping up and standing at attention, when he recognized the group, the youthful form and features of Hadley Morris were revealed. The boy's face was tear-streaked, and he made no effort to hide his grief.

"How now, sirrah?" exclaimed he who was the central figure of the group. "Are you wounded, Lieutenant?"

"No, Your Excellency. But my—my dear Molly dropped under me when I rode back to the field—"

"Why, 'tis Master Morris!" interrupted the other. "He brought your message to me, Marquis," he added, turning to the young officer at his side. "He is one of General Wayne's aides." Then he beckoned the trembling youth to draw near, and leaning from his saddle laid his hand upon Hadley's shoulder. "You rode well, to-day, Captain Morris," he said, and passed on.

Black Molly was indeed sorely spent, but

Hadley put forth every effort in her behalf, and finally she was able to follow him slowly off the field. It then needed only a long rest and careful attention to make her as fit as ever.

When General Washington made a promotion on the field, he never forgot to have the appointment confirmed. And in Prentice, Colonel Cadwalader, and the Yankee scout, Lafe Holdness, he found friends eager to congratulate him upon his good fortune in attracting the attention of the Commander-in-Chief. "I told you a mighty good officer was being spoiled as long as you continued a stable-boy at a country inn," Major Prentice declared. "And if you're spared, you'll rise higher yet," which prophecy was really fulfilled, for Hadley Morris went back to his uncle's farm, when the war was over, with a major's commission himself.

There were dark days for the American cause, even after Valley Forge was but a painful memory; but none were so dark as those which have been here related, with the battle of Monmouth, where victory was snatched from the very jaws of defeat by Washington's personal efforts, the cause entered upon a more hopeful

era. It was at this time that the forces which had been at work all winter against the Commander-in-Chief came to a head, and following swiftly upon the exposure of the cabal was the punishment of its head and front, the man Conway.

Perhaps no more fitting tribute to the character of the man whose spirit kept alive the fires of liberty in Valley Forge was ever written than that which emanated from the wounded Conway as, believing his death imminent, he penned the following letter to George Washington:

"Sir:—I find myself just able to hold my pen during a few minutes, and take this opportunity of expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said anything disagreeable to Your Excellency. My career will soon be over; therefore justice and truth prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are in my eyes The Great and Good Man. May you long enjoy the love, esteem, and veneration of these States whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues."

Stern though he was by nature, patrician as he has been called, Washington's comment

when he received this abject apology showed the Christian kindness which was the foundation of one of the noblest characters the world has ever seen. "Poor Conway!" he said. "He never could have intended much harm. There is nothing to forgive."

* * * * * *

And so we come to the end of this narrative —the story of a boy's exciting part in the incidents of that memorable winter of 1777–78. Later events might be spoken of, and there might be recounted the honorable part which Hadley Morris took in the further movements of the American forces until freedom for the States was a fact rather than a dream. But the object has been to interest the reader in the boy hero; and, after the experiences herein related, Hadley Morris can scarce longer be called a boy; for experience makes us old, not years.

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